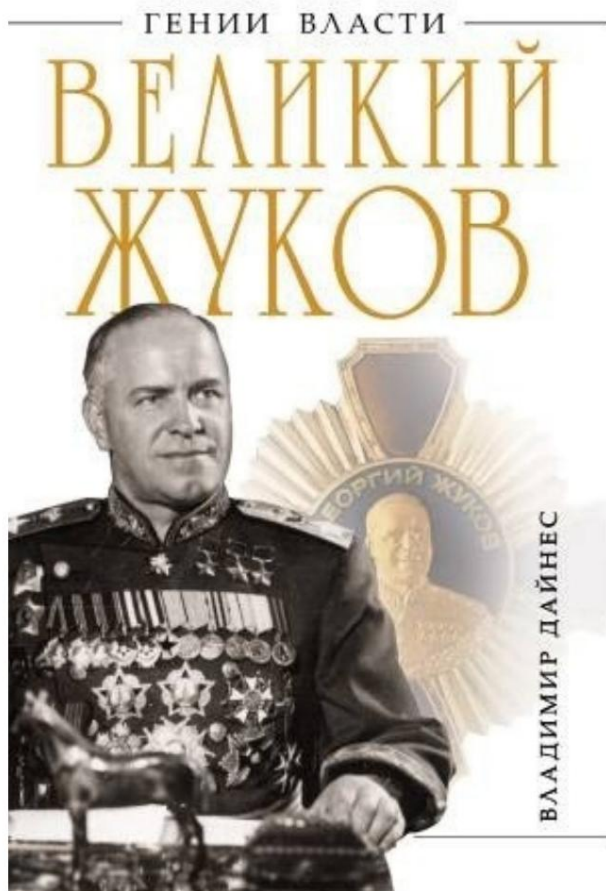


Vladimir Ottovich Daines Veliky Zhukov



Daines V.O. Great Zhukov. M.: Eksmo, 2013. - 640 p.- (Series: Geniuses of power)

annotation

This book is the best modern biography of G.K. Zhukov Marshal of Victory, a major A valued not only how genius commander statesman, even And dignity. because it is of the utmost importance But And President Eisenhower spoke Not By about him as "V man V Soviet government, perhaps the second after Stalin. It was Zhukov who played the decisive role in the elimination of Beria. Without Zhukov's active support, And personally decided to save "Mikita" to the "anti-party Khrushchev hardly commanded his arrest. would Konstantinovich have whether group" to on campaign By exposing the cult of personality. George 1957, V dismiss that gratitude Khrushchev vilely, "thievishly" (the And V Not allowing expression of Zhukov himself) dismissed the Marshal of Victory, accusing him of "organizing a military putsch of the junta". V "Bonapartism" for the And trying With purpose of seizing power V military hands This book restores the true story of the overthrow And

the disgrace of the Marshal of Victory, tracing his entire path of impetuous military political Olympus
of unspoken exile, which took off to and from
he ended his days.

Vladimir Daines. Great Zhukov

From the publisher



G. Zhukov

Not without excitement, we bring to the reader's judgment another biographical publication dedicated to Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov. Much has been written about our outstanding commander, and yet the need for a new book has matured not by chance. And the point is not so much in the desire to fill his biography with some new details or details, but in the desire to once again rethink the image of a person who has become the property of our history.

Most authors of books about Zhukov are not impartial - such a topic does not tolerate a cold soul. But at the same time, the author's sympathies and views often developed into a desire to impose on the reader their own, subjective vision of the image, their own interpretation of certain phenomena.

Let's make a reservation right away that the book we are presenting does not pretend to create a complete and even more impeccable portrait of G.K. Zhukov. But its author, a military historian, seeks to show his hero against the backdrop of an objective picture of historical events, avoiding giving him intrusive characteristics on any occasion, which is sometimes the sin of biographical publications. On the pages of the book, he remarks: "Zhukov's personality is so unique, and his military talent and merits are so great that they do not need either artificial exaltation or retouching. All the more clumsy are attempts to create an idol out of him, eclipsing the merits of his comrades-in-arms.

I think it's a fair statement. After all, it's a sin to hide, often individual authors so jealously exalted all the victories, deeds and decisions of Georgy Konstantinovich that they voluntarily or involuntarily distorted or simply hushed up that which violated the harmony of their

storytelling. As a result, they only gave food to his enemies and those who never wanted and are now far from intending to objectively look at the great and tragic pages of our history, primarily related to the Great Patriotic War, Stalin's dictatorship and post-war stagnation. Zhukov is the flesh of the flesh of his people. This, above all, explains the universal love for him. That is why he was never forgotten - neither during the period of failures, nor during the hard disgrace.

There was everything in his life and military career: brilliant victories and bitter defeats, triumphs and falls. And the qualities of a folk nugget were manifested in everything: the standard is high, but it is not suitable for cutting. Akin to this property and character - it is not polished. Therefore, no such attempt is made in this book.

Chapter I. At the ancient shooting range

Coincidence or not, but the land on which G.K. Zhukov was born on November 19 (December 1), 1896, has a glorious military history. His native village of Strelkovshchina was located in the Ugodsko-Zavodskaya volost of the Maloyaroslavetsky district of the Kaluga province. In ancient times, this territory was inhabited by the Slavic tribes of the Vyatichi, who in the second half of the 10th century, as a result of the campaigns of the Kiev prince Svyatoslav against the Volga Bulgars and the Khazars, were liberated from the Khazar yoke and became part of the Kiev principality. Later, during the fragmentation of Rus', the Kaluga lands became part of the Chernigov

principalities.

During its centuries-old history, Kaluga residents have been attacked by external enemies more than once. In 1237, the army of Batu Khan ravaged many cities of the region. In the XIV century, almost the entire Kaluga land was under the rule of Lithuania. In the battle on the Kulikovo field in 1380, as part of the united Russian army under the leadership of Grand Duke Dmitry Ivanovich Donskoy, militia units and squads led by their princes from Tarusa, Obolensk, Borovsk fought. At the beginning of the XVIII century, these regions survived the invasion of the Polish interventionists and the uprising under the leadership of Ivan Bolotnikov.

In 1651, the Dutch entrepreneurs Marselis and Akema founded an ironworks on the Ugodka River (a tributary of the Protva River). In 1656, the place where it was located was named Ugodskiy Zavod. A century later, in 1751, the Ugodsky Plant was transferred to Count A.I. Shuvalov, and in 1780 it stopped working. The village had this name for about two centuries. Three kilometers from the Ugodsky Plant (now the city of Zhukov) was the village of Strelkovshchina (the modern name of Strelkovka). It was inhabited by serf masters resettled under Peter I from the Ural factories. The locals called them "strelkovshchina", because the craftsmen cast guns at the Ugodsky Zavod and tested them at the shooting range near the large village of Ogub. The craftsmen settled there, on the outskirts of Ogub, and gradually their settlement became an independent village, and so it was called Strelkovshchina. In 1719, the Kaluga province was established as part of the Moscow province, which in 1776 was already transformed into an independent province.

province. During the Napoleonic invasion, Kaluga land again became the scene of fierce battles. In the Battle of Tarutino on October 6 (18), 1812, the Russian army defeated the vanguard of the French army under the command of Marshal Murat. At this place in 1834 a 20-meter monument was erected with the inscription:

“In this place, the Russian army, led by
Field Marshal Kutuzov, having strengthened himself, saved Russia and Europe.

Russian soldiers showed miracles of courage in the battle of Maloyaroslavets on October 12 (24), 1812, after which Napoleon was forced to retreat along the Old Smolensk road through the devastated terrain.

The Patriotic War of 1812 dealt a severe blow to the well-being of the Kaluga province, which with difficulty overcame the consequences of the invasion of Napoleon's army. On December 15, 1874, the opening of the Syzran-Vyazemskaya railway section took place, linking Kaluga with Tula and Vyazma. But this did not bring a revival to the economic life of the province. In addition, the shallowing of the Oka led to a decrease in river traffic. By the end of the 19th century, a number of old traditional crafts completely disappeared. Only matting, bristles and leather remain the subject of export, while the main occupations of Kaluga residents are retail trade, crafts, and gardening.

“The house in the village of Strelkovka, Kaluga province, where I was born...,” recalled G.K. Zhukov, “stood in the middle of the village. He was very old and at one corner firmly settled into the ground. From time to time, the walls and roof were overgrown with moss and grass. There was only one room in the house with two windows.

Father and mother did not know by whom and when our house was built. From the stories of the old-timers, it was known that the childless widow Annushka Zhukova once lived in it. To brighten up her loneliness, she took a two-year-old boy from an orphanage - my father. Who were his real parents, no one could say, and then his father did not try to find out his ancestry. 1 The fact that Zhukov's father Konstantin was a foundling later became the reason

for all kinds of speculation. “There used to be legends about his Aryan origin,” the marshal's daughter Maria wrote in 1991. — Now there is a new, “fresh” version. It turns out that Zhukov was a Greek. When attempts to accuse Zhukov of mediocrity and present him as an “enemy of the people” turn out to be futile, attempts are made to prove at least that he was not Russian. writes: “The origin of Georgy Konstantinovich is obscure.”³ What can be said about this? In simple Russian peasant families, there was no one to draw family trees, and there was no time. In addition, in the vast majority of cases, these pedigrees would be

1 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. In 3 vols. 10th ed., add. according to the author's manuscript. M., 1990. T. 1. S. 11.

2 Zhukova M. Marshal legend//Soviet Russia. 1991. November 30.

3 Sokolov B. Unknown Zhukov: a portrait without retouching in the mirror of the era. Minsk: 2000. S. 3.

very unpretentious.

Anna Zhukova died when Konstantin was only eight years old. The boy was forced to go to work and managed to get a job as an apprentice to a shoemaker in the village of Ugodsky Zavod. He quickly mastered the craft and three years later went to Moscow, where he entered the shoe shop of the German Weiss, famous for its own shoe store. In April 1870, Konstantin Zhukov married, taking as his wife the "peasant daughter Anna Ivanova" from Strelkovka. Four years later, she gave birth to a son, Grigory, and at the very beginning of 1884, a second son, Vasily, but he died two years later. And on April 16, 1892, consumption carried Anna Ivanovna away. The mother of Georgy Konstantinovich, as evidenced by the entry in the church register, was born on September 26, 1863 in the village of Chernaya Dirt, six kilometers from Strelkovka. She was the eldest child in the family of peasants Artemy Merkulovich and Olimpiada Petrovna. In the second half of the 1980s, they and their younger children

adopted the surname Pilikhins, but Ustinya never bore this surname.

For Ustinya Artemyeva, marriage to Konstantin Zhukov was not the first. Previously, she was married to Faddey Stefanovich from the village of Turbina, Spassky Volost. He was three years younger than his wife and also without a family name. Four years later, Thaddeus, having lived in the world for only 23 years, died of consumption. In order to feed her young son Ivan, Ustinya became a servant in neighboring villages, where she gave birth to another child out of wedlock, who soon died. On September 27, 1892, the priest of St. Nicholas Church in the village of Ugodsky Zavod, Father Vasily Vsesvyatsky, married Konstantin and Ustinya. He also performed the rite of baptism of George. In

the metric book of the St. Nicholas Church, as the parents of the baby George, born on November 19 and baptized on November 20, 1896, "the village of Strelkovka, the peasant Konstantin Artemyev Zhukov and his legal wife Justina Artemyev, both of the Orthodox faith," were indicated. Two years before George, on March 20, 1894, the Zhukovs had a daughter, Maria. Son Alyosha was born on March 11, 1899, but he lived only a year and a half.

Georgy Zhukov was very similar to his mother. And not just facial features. A woman of extraordinary physical strength and endurance, she endowed her son with good health. Zhukov recalled: "Mother was physically a very strong person. She easily lifted five-pound sacks of grain from the ground and carried them over a considerable distance. They said that she inherited physical strength from her father - my grandfather Artem, who crawled under the horse and lifted it or took it by the tail and put it on the croup with one jerk.

Severe need, the meager earnings of the father in shoemaking forced the mother to earn extra money in the transportation of goods. In spring, summer and early autumn, she worked in the field, and in late autumn she went to the county town of Maloyaroslavets for groceries and took them to merchants at the Ugodsky Zavod. For the trip, she earned a ruble - a ruble twenty kopecks. Well, what was the income? If you subtract the cost of feeding the horses, lodging in the city, meals, repairing shoes, etc., then there was very little left. I think the beggars collected more during this time ... We, the children of the poor, saw how difficult it was for our mothers, and bitterly experienced their tears. And what a joy it was when they brought us bagels or gingerbread from Maloyaroslavets! If

we managed to save some money for Christmas or Easter pies with stuffing, then our enthusiasm knew no bounds.”⁴ Konstantin Zhukov, after

working in Moscow for some time, after the events of 1905 was fired and expelled from there. On this occasion, Georgy Konstantinovich writes: “In 1906, my father returned to the village. He said that he would not go to Moscow again, since the police forbade him to live in the city, allowing him to live only in his native village. I was pleased that my father had returned permanently.”⁵ From that time until the day of his death, he lived in the country without a break. Konstantin Artemyevich died in 1921.

G.K. Zhukov, recalling his father, noted that he was respected in the village, his opinion was taken into account. Usually at gatherings, meetings, the last word belonged to him. “I loved my father very much, and he spoiled me,” said Georgy Konstantinovich. - But there were cases when my father severely punished me for some offense and even beat me with a spandyr (shoe belt), demanding that I ask for forgiveness. But I was stubborn - and no matter how much he beat me - I endured, but did not ask for forgiveness. Once he gave me such a spanking that I ran away from home and lived for three days in hemp with a neighbor. Except for my sister, no one knew where I was. We agreed with her that she would not betray me and bring me food. They looked for me everywhere, but I was well disguised. I was accidentally discovered in my shelter by a neighbor and brought home. My father added more, but then he took pity and forgave me.”⁶ As A.D. Mirkina said in her article, Ekaterina Fedotyevna, a fellow villager and namesake

of G.K. always “honestly” resolving childish disputes.”⁷

Directness and firmness, stubbornness, courage, remarkable physical strength - the obvious qualities of Georgy Konstantinovich were fully manifested already in his earliest years. And they were very useful in the difficult village life of those years. For the Zhukovs, the year 1902 turned out to be especially difficult, when the roof of the house collapsed from decay in the fall. The family moved into the barn and was forced to urgently, before the cold weather, buy a new log house. Konstantin Artemyevich borrowed money from his fellow villagers and bought it at a reasonable price in installments, and the neighbors helped put up the house and cover it with straw. “The year turned out to be lean, and there was enough grain only until mid-December,” Zhukov recalled. - The earnings of my father and mother went to bread, salt and payment of debts. Thanks to the neighbors, they sometimes helped us out with either cabbage soup or porridge. Such mutual assistance in the villages was not an exception, but rather a tradition of friendship and solidarity among Russian people who lived in dire need.” Georgy Zhukov, like many of his peers,

often ran to fish on the rivers Ogublyanka and Protva. In Ogublyanka there were a lot of roach, perch and tench, which the teenagers caught mainly with baskets.

⁴ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 12–13.

⁵ Ibid. S. 19.

⁶ Ibid. pp. 17–18.

⁷ Quot. Quoted from: Mirkina A. Marshal writes a book // Ogonyok. 1988. No. 6. S. 12.

Picking mushrooms and berries served as a considerable help in subsistence. And from an early age, one of George's favorite pastimes was hunting. He was taught to it by the brother of the godmother Georgy Prokhor, who worked as a sex in a tavern in the village of Ogub. He had something wrong with his leg, and everyone called him lame Proshka. Despite his lameness, Prokhor was a passionate hunter, shooting ducks in the summer and catching a hare in the winter. The main duty of the young George was to get ducks out of the water or go to the corral.

For the first time, George experienced hard peasant labor when he was not even seven years old: together with adults, he shook hay with a rake and raked it into shocks, reaped rye. During the harvest, he accidentally cut the little finger of his left hand with a sickle. "How many years have passed since then," Zhukov wrote in his memoirs, "and the scar on the left little finger has survived and reminds me of the first failures on the agricultural front."

In the autumn of 1903 he was to go to school. He prepared very carefully for this important event and, together with his sister, tried to learn printed letters from the primer. Several more guys were going to study from Strelkovka, including Georgy's bosom friend Leshka Zhukov, nicknamed Kolotyryny. Zhukovs in the village, there were five households, and children with namesakes were distinguished by the names of their mothers: Ustinins, Avdotyins, Tatyannas ... The parish school was one and a half kilometers away, in the village of Velichkovo. Children from other surrounding villages - Lykovo and Ogub - also studied there. The teacher at the school was Sergei Nikolaevich Remizov, according to many testimonies, an experienced teacher and a good person. He did not punish anyone in vain and never raised his voice to the guys, nevertheless, the students respected and obeyed him. Sergei Nikolayevich's father, a quiet and kind old man, was a priest and taught the Law of God at school. And it is evident that it was no coincidence that G.K. Zhukov, recalling his childhood, noted that one of the rare joys was his school: he studied with desire and diligently. By the way, Georgy and Lesha Kolotyryny had good voices, and both were included in the school choir.

Almost all the guys from Strelkovka went to the second grade with good grades, and only Lesha, despite the collective help, was not transferred - according to the Law of God, he had a deuce. George's sister, Maria, also studied poorly and was left in the second grade for the second year. Therefore, her father and mother decided that she should leave school and take on the household. Masha wept bitterly and argued that she had missed many lessons while caring for Alyosha when her mother went to the cart. George stood up for his sister. In the end, they convinced their mother to leave Masha at school.

In 1906, Georgy Zhukov graduated from a three-year parochial school with a certificate of merit. On this occasion, his mother gave him a new shirt, and his father sewed the boots himself. Konstantin Artemyevich, believing that his son had become quite literate and could now begin to master the craft, decided to take George to Moscow, but his mother insisted that he live in the village for another year. In the Maloyaroslavets district, two specialties were held in high esteem: furriers and bakers. It was difficult to feed on the local, scarce sandy soil for crops. As a rule, women worked the land, and most of the men worked in the cities, coming to the village to harvest crops and prepare fodder for livestock.

Parents decided to assign Georgy to a furrier's workshop, to his mother's brother, Mikhail Artemyevich Pilikhin. According to the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov, he, like the mother of Georgy Konstantinovich, grew up in poverty, and at the age of eleven he was apprenticed to a furrier's workshop. However, he soon became a master and, as he was very frugal, managed to save money in a few years and open his own business. Being a good furrier, Mikhail acquired many rich customers, whom he "rubbed mercilessly." He "exploited mercilessly" his furriers and students and amassed a capital of about fifty thousand rubles. It can be assumed that Zhukov gave a not entirely flattering description of his uncle in the spirit of the time when *Memories and Reflections* were written.

After all, the owner of the workshop could not be anything but an exploiter. But this, judging by the available other evidence, is not entirely true. Thanks primarily to his industriousness and comprehended furrier art, Mikhail Pilikhin managed to open his own workshop and one of the best fur stores in Moscow on the Kuznetsk bridge. In the summer of 1908, George, together with his father, visited the village of Chernaya Mud, where his uncle spent the summer. They were met rather dryly, but the lad's commendable list and strong appearance made a favorable impression on Mikhail Artemyevich. A little later, Uncle Sergei, the

brother of M.A. Pilikhin's wife, took George to Moscow. The big city immediately struck the imagination: tall houses, cobbled streets, cab drivers. Georgy's duties, as the youngest student, consisted of cleaning the premises of the workshop and apartment, cleaning the shoes of the owners and

their children. On the very first day, the eldest boy Kuzma took George to the nearest shops, where he was to go for tobacco and vodka for the craftsmen. The cook, she is also a senior craftswoman, Matryosh showed how to clean and wash dishes, make a samovar. In the morning of the next day, George was seated in a corner of the workshop and told that he should first of all learn how to sew fur. Matryosha provided him with a needle, thread and thimble, showed him the sewing technique.

Zhukov's cousin, M.M. Pilikhin, who studied there, recalled: "The furrier season began in July. From December 20, all the masters left for their villages for Christmas, and returned on January 10–15. Each student was attached to a master who taught him. The masters came at seven o'clock. It was the duty of the students to prepare the workplaces for the arrival of the masters, and at the end of the work, sweep the workshop and clean everything up. By the time the craftsmen arrived, we put the samovar on and prepared everything for breakfast. All the masters were at the master's grubs - they had breakfast, lunch, dinner. It was better for production, and it was better for the craftsmen: they will eat well and rest. And if they go to the teahouse, drink there and only have a snack, then the half-starved will return already tipsy. They would be unproductive workers." This picture is supplemented in detail by Zhukov himself: "For the slightest mistake, the owner beat us mercilessly. And his hand was heavy. The craftsmen beat us, the craftswomen beat us,

and the hostess did not lag behind them. When the owner was not in a good mood - it is better not to catch his eye. He could, without any reason, beat him so that his ears rang all day long.

Sometimes the owner made two delinquent boys beat each other

each other with honeysuckle (a shrub whose rods were used to knock out furs), while saying: "Beat harder, harder!" I had to endure meekly. We knew that everywhere the masters

beat the students - such was the law, such was the order. The owner believed that the students were given at his full disposal, and no one would ever ask him for beatings, for inhuman treatment of minors. Yes, no one was interested in how we work, how we eat, in what conditions we live. The owner was the highest judge for us. So we pulled the heavy yoke, which not every adult could do."⁸ As you can see, Georgy Konstantinovich does not indulge his uncle with good characteristics. And sometimes it is difficult to agree with them. It

is known, for example, that Mikhail Artemyevich built a new house in the village for his parents and took care of other relatives. Here is the testimony of M.M. Pilikhin: "In 1912, George's mother fell ill and came to Moscow to her brother. The father invited doctors, who, after examining the patient, recommended that she be immediately taken to the hospital, where she underwent a complex operation. When George's mother left the hospital, she stayed with her brother for about a month, recovered, rested and began to ask her brother to send her home. The father asked George to take his mother to the village. With great joy, he went to see his mother home, to Strelkovka, and lived in the village for several days, saw his comrades and relatives and returned to Moscow to Uncle Misha.

M.A. Pilikhin did not forget about his nephew, otherwise he would hardly have taken him to the store after two years of work in the studio. Pilikhin's eldest son, Alexander, also worked in the store, helping George learn all the intricacies of customer service. And he, with his commitment, accuracy and diligence, clearly came to the court, and it is no coincidence that already at the age of 15 they began to call him Georgy Konstantinovich. In 1911, another of his sons, Mikhail, came to his father's enterprise as an

apprentice. As a senior, George took patronage over him. Sometimes they packed the goods together in boxes and carried them to the office for shipment by rail. "While packing the goods, Georgy used to yell at me, and sometimes I even got a cuff from him," recalled Mikhail Mikhailovich. - But I did not remain in debt, gave him change and ran away, as he could hit me more. My older brother Alexander stood up for me, he was the same age as George. And for the most part, they lived together..."

George especially respected Alexander, who introduced him to reading and supplied him with books. They slept together on the floorboards, read and talked. The first books for Zhukov were the novel *The Nurse*, the fascinating stories about Nat Pinkerton, *The Notes on Sherlock Holmes*, and other adventure literature published in the cheap library series. He himself recalled that it was interesting, but not very instructive. Therefore, together with Alexander, they undertook the further study of the Russian language, mathematics, geography and reading popular science books. "They usually worked together, mainly when the owner was not at home and on Sundays. But no matter how we hide

from the owner, he still found out about our classes. I thought that he would kick me out or severely punish me. However, contrary to expectations, he praised us for a reasonable deal. So for more

than a year I studied quite successfully on my own and entered the evening general education courses, which provided education in the volume of the city school. 9 M.A. Pilikhin was persuaded to let Georgy go to courses in

the evenings by his sons. "I was very glad," Georgy Konstantinovich recalled. "True, the lessons had to be prepared at night on the floor, near the restroom, where the on-duty lamp of a dozen two candles was on." We had to save money on textbooks and books. Often, instead of using the money that the owner gave out for a horseback ride to the customer, he walked across Moscow on foot.

But not only studying and reading was fond of George with his cousins. They also loved to play cards, "twenty-one", for which Zhukov, according to his recollections, once received a slap in the face from the owner. According to Mikhail Pilikhin, the story with the cards ended in a more peaceful way, but there is no doubt that Mikhail Artemyevich, who hated such activities, put a decisive end to it

calls.

By the way, according to Zhukov's memoirs, he graduated from general education courses in 1911. However, in his autobiography, dated 1938, Georgy Konstantinovich noted: "Education is lower. He studied for 3 years until 1907 at the parochial school in the village. Velichkovo Ugodsko Zavodskoy district of the Moscow region and studied for 5 months at evening courses at a city school in Moscow, Gazetny Lane. There were no means to study further - they gave him to study furriery. For the 4th grade of the city school, he passed (exams. - V.D.) as an external student at the 1st Ryazan Cavalry Courses Art. Starozhilovo R.U.Zh.D. in 1920". Later, in 1948, filling out a personal personnel record in connection with his appointment as commander of the Ural Military District, in the column "education" Zhukov indicated that he entered the 4th grade of the city school in 1907, graduating from it in 1908 (and not in 1911, as he wrote in his memoirs). Here Zhukov did not specify that he passed the exams for the 4th grade only in 1920. At the same time, it is not clear how he could enter the 4th grade in 1907 if he arrived in Moscow only in 1908?

... On Saturdays and Sundays, the guys were taken to the Kremlin, to the Assumption Cathedral, or to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Both Zhukov and M. Pilihin recall that they did not like to go to church and always tried to escape from there under some pretext. However, they went with pleasure to the Assumption Cathedral to listen to the magnificent synodal choir and especially to Protodeacon Rozov: his voice was like a Jericho trumpet.

In the fourth year of his studies, George, as a physically stronger boy, was taken to Nizhny Novgorod to the famous fair, where M.A. Pilikhin rented a shop for the wholesale fur trade. At the fair, Georgy's duties included mainly packing the sold goods and sending them to their destination through the city pier on the Volga, the pier on the Oka, or through the railway commodity office. Traders and buyers from all over came to the Nizhny Novgorod fair.

Russia. "Overseas merchants" from other states also brought their goods there. In the same year, George had a chance to go to another fair, in Uryupino, in the Region of the Don Cossacks. The introduction to politics

was slow. The masters, writes Georgy Konstantinovich, read little, and, except for F.I. Kolesov, no one in the workshop understood political affairs. Despite their low political awareness, the master furriers, Zhukov recalled, were still aware of the shooting of workers at the Lena mines and the growing revolutionary ferment everywhere, and Kolesov occasionally brought the Bolshevik newspapers *Zvezda* and *Pravda*. In 1912, Georgy Konstantinovich graduated from his studies, and Uncle Misha gave him a small amount of

money in the form of awards and, as it should be after graduation, a three-piece suit, a demi-season coat, a winter coat with fur with an astrakhan collar, shoes and underwear. Having received a month's leave, Georgy went home to Strelkovka. At the Obolenskoye half-station, his mother met him, cried for a long time and hugged her son. Ustinya Artemieevna has changed a lot in these four years and has grown old. Masha grew up and became a real bride. My father was very old and bent even more - he was in his seventieth year. A day after returning to Strelkovka, Georgy took part in mowing. At first he was tired, sweating, apparently affected by a long break. Then everything went well: he mowed

cleanly, keeping up with the others. "In the evenings, forgetting about fatigue, the youth gathered near the barn, and the fun began," recalled Georgy Konstantinovich. - They sang songs, sincere and heartfelt. The girls brought out a gentle melody with strong voices, the guys tried to echo with young baritones and not yet strong basses. Then they danced until they dropped. We dispersed in the morning and barely had time to fall asleep, as they woke us up, and we again went to the mowing. In the evening everything started all over again. It's hard to say when we slept."¹⁰ Fellow villagers remembered Georgy Zhukov as a lively and cheerful guy, "a storm of girls". They talked about his clash with the postman Philya because of Mani Melnikova, who liked him. Fillet did not like that George was dancing with Manya. He pulled out a revolver, which the postman relied

on by the nature of his service, and threatened: "If you dance with Manya again, I'll kill you!" But Georgy deftly snatched a revolver from his opponent, threw the weapon into the bushes and, as if nothing had happened, continued to dance with Manya. Fili is gone. Later, Georgy Konstantinovich recalled: "When I was young, I loved to dance very much. The girls were beautiful!

At that time, Georgy Konstantinovich had serious feelings for Nyura Sinelshchikova. When she married another, Zhukov, having learned about this, came to the village and shouted in a voice not his own: "Nyrka, what have you done ?!" Relatives barely managed to calm George and convince him not to do stupid things. Many years later, Zhukov presented her with his *Memoirs and Reflections*, inscribed: "A. V. Sinelshchikova - a friend of my childhood in good memory. The vacation flew by quickly, and it was necessary to return

to Moscow. On the penultimate night of George's stay at home in a neighboring village

¹⁰ Ibid. S. 59.

Kostinka there was a fire. A strong wind was blowing, and the fire that had started in the middle of the village began to quickly spread to neighboring houses, sheds and barns. The youth at this late time was still walking and noticed thick smoke from afar. Everyone rushed to the firehouse, quickly rolled out the barrel and dragged it in their arms to the burning village. Despite the desperate efforts of the fire brigades that had gathered from the neighboring villages, half the village burned out. George, running with a bucket of water past one house, heard a cry: "Save me, we're on fire!" He rushed to where the screams came from, and pulled out the children, frightened to death, and the sick old woman. The next morning, two burnt holes were found on a new jacket - a gift from the owner. Returning to Moscow, Georgy continued to work in the workshop of M.A. Pilikhin as a

young master (apprentice). "The owner asked me how I think to continue to live: will I stay in an apartment with a workshop or go to a private apartment? - recalled Georgy Konstantinovich. - If you stay at the workshop and continue to eat in the kitchen with the boys, then your salary will be ten rubles; if you go to a private apartment, then you will receive eighteen rubles. I had little life experience, and I said that I would live at the workshop. Apparently, the owner was quite happy with this, since at the end of the work of the masters there was always some kind of urgent, unpaid work for me. A little time passed, and I

decided: "No, this will not work. I'll go to a private apartment, and in the evenings I'll read better." At Christmas I again went to the village, already an independent person. I was in my 17th year, and most importantly, I was a master who received as much as ten rubles, and not everyone succeeded at that time.

The owner trusted me, apparently convinced of my honesty. He often sent me to the bank to receive checks or deposit money into his checking account. He also valued me as a trouble-free worker and often took me to his shop, where, in addition to furrier work, I was entrusted with packing goods and sending them to commodity offices. I liked this kind of work more than in the workshop,

where, apart from swearing between the masters, no other conversations were heard. The store is a different matter. Here one had to move among more or less intelligent people, to hear their conversations about current events."¹¹ And events swirled over Russia like dark clouds.

Chapter II. I will fight honestly for Russia

The beginning of the First World War, which dragged eight European states into its fiery whirlpool (Germany and Austria-Hungary on the one hand, England, France, Russia, Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro opposing them on the other), was remembered by G.K. shops in Moscow. "Agents of the Okhrana and the Black Hundreds, under the guise of patriotic slogans, organized a pogrom of German and Austrian firms. Many were involved in this, seeking to simply profit from something. But since these people are not

¹¹ Ibid. S. 61.

could read signs in foreign languages, then at the same time they smashed other foreign firms - French, English. "12

In the fall of 1914, Alexander Pilikhin volunteered for the front. He also called Georgy Zhukov with him, but he refused. In "Memoirs and Reflections" this refusal is motivated quite thoroughly: such a decision was made under the influence of F.I. Kolesov, who believed that the poor had nothing to fight for. However, in the memoirs, assessments of the initial period of the war from purely class positions look too official, in the spirit of the influence of a much later time. It is evident that Zhukov is not finishing something. After all, he knew that Mikhail Pilikhin was proud of his elder brother's deed, and Alexander sent a letter from the front, where he wrote: "I, the son of my Motherland, could not remain without participation." He was seriously wounded at the front, and he was evacuated to a hospital in Moscow. Alexander was discharged from the hospital as an invalid and returned home to his father. In February 1918, A.M. Pilikhin voluntarily joined the Red Army and died in the battles near Tsaritsyn. Zhukov still worked in the workshop, but he already lived in a private apartment in Okhotny Ryad, which he rented for three rubles a month from the widow

Malysheva. He fell in love with her daughter Maria, and soon they decided to get married. But the war confused all hopes and calculations. Due to heavy losses at the front, at the end of July 1915, an early call-up of youth born in 1896 was announced. It was Zhukov's turn. "I didn't feel particularly enthusiastic, because at every step in Moscow I met unfortunate cripples who had returned from the front, and immediately I saw how the sons of the rich were still widely and carelessly living nearby," noted Georgy Konstantinovich in his memoirs. - They traveled around Moscow on "reckless drivers", in chic trips, played at races and races, staged drunken orgies in the Yar restaurant. However, I thought that if I was accepted into the army, I would honestly fight for Russia."13

M.A. Pilikhin, who valued Zhukov as a good worker, suggested arranging for him to be left for a year due to illness, and maybe even clean. However, George considered that he was obliged to defend his homeland in his duty. It is unlikely that his views could change so much in a relatively short time. It is clear that the reasons for the initial refusal to go to the front were by no means a lack of patriotism or courage.

And again, native Strelkovka, farewell to his parents, and a few days later - a recruiting station in Maloyaroslavets, where Georgy Zhukov, together with fellow villagers of the same age, arrived in early August 1915. The soldier's life began.

Later, Georgy Konstantinovich more than once thought about why his life turned out this way and not otherwise. For example, at that time he had sufficient educational qualifications to enter the school of ensigns. But the nineteen-year-old boy did not want this, and of his own free will they took him into the soldiers. In a conversation with the writer Konstantin Simonov, G.K. Zhukov explained his act as follows: "My decision was influenced by a trip to my native village shortly before (before being drafted into the army. - V.D.). I met there, at home, two ensigns from our village, so bad, unsuccessful, awkward,

12 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 62-63.

13 Ibid. S. 63.

that, looking at them, it was even somehow embarrassing for me to think that I, a nineteen-year-old boy, would graduate from the school of ensigns and go to command a platoon and command over experienced soldiers, over bearded men, and in their eyes I would be the same as these ensigns, which I saw in my village. I didn't want it, it was embarrassing. I became a soldier.”¹⁴

Zhukov got into the cavalry, and almost a quarter of a century of his military biography was associated with it. After arriving in Kaluga, the recruits were sent to a training camp outside the city. There they were told that they were in the 189th Reserve Infantry Battalion, where the command of the 5th Reserve Cavalry Regiment would be formed. First, they had to learn infantry formation, and everyone was given training rifles. The separated commander, Corporal Shakhvorostov, announced the internal regulations and duties of recruits. He sternly warned that no one could go anywhere except “out of necessity” if he did not want to get into the disciplinary battalion. “He spoke abruptly and sharply, accompanying each word with a wave of his fist. Such malice shone in his small eyes, as if we were his sworn enemies. ¹⁵ At first, military service was given to Georgy with difficulty. During the drills, all the recruits did their best, but it was not easy to please the authorities, and even more so to wait for promotion. Finding fault

with the fact that one soldier was knocked off his feet, the platoon commander senior non-commissioned officer Malyavko detained everyone for additional classes. “The impression of the first day was depressing,” Zhukov noted. “I wanted to lie down on the bunk and fall asleep. But, as if having guessed our intentions, the platoon commander ordered to line up and announced that tomorrow we would be taken out for a general evening verification, and therefore we should learn the national anthem “God Save the Tsar!” Today. Learning and chanting continued until night. At 6 o'clock in the morning we were already on our feet, doing morning exercises ... It was not easy to get involved in the service. But life didn't spoil us even before, and after two weeks the majority got used to the army order.”¹⁶

The days in the training unit were monotonous, similar to each other like two peas in a pod. On the first Sunday, Zhukov, like other recruits, was not allowed to rest, but was sent to clean the parade ground and the camp town. Cleaning dragged on until lunch, and after the “dead hour” they cleaned weapons, repaired soldier's ammunition and wrote letters to relatives. Corporal Shakhvorostov warned that it was impossible to complain about anything in the letters, since the censorship would not let him through anyway.

In September 1915, the training team was sent to Ukraine, to the 5th reserve cavalry regiment, which was located in the city of Balakliya, Kharkov province. The echelon arrived at the Savintsy station, where marching reinforcements for the 10th Cavalry Division were being prepared. Maloyaroslavetsky, Muscovites and several guys from the Voronezh province were assigned to the dragoon squadron.

¹⁴ Op. by: Simonov K.M. Notes on the biography of G.K. Zhukov // Military History magazine. 1987. No. 11. P. 40.

¹⁵ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 66.

¹⁶ Ibid. S. 67.

A day later, the new arrivals were given cavalry uniforms and horse equipment, each was assigned a horse. Zhukov came across a very obstinate mare of dark gray color named Cup. "Serving in the cavalry turned out to be more interesting than in the infantry, but much more difficult," recalled Georgy Konstantinovich. - In addition to general classes, training in equestrianism, possession of edged weapons and triple cleaning of horses were added. I had to get up not at 6 o'clock, as in the infantry, but at 5, and also go to bed an hour later. The most difficult thing was equestrian training, that is, riding, vaulting and possession of edged weapons - a pike and a saber. During the ride, many rubbed their legs until they bled, but it was impossible to complain. We were told only one thing: "Be patient, Cossack, you will be an ataman." And we endured until we were firmly seated in the saddle."¹⁷ The platoon commander, senior non-commissioned officer Durakov, despite his surname, turned

out to be far from being a stupid person. He was a very demanding boss, but the soldier never offended and was always restrained. But the other commander, junior non-commissioned officer Borodavko, was the exact opposite of him: noisy, nervous and extremely impudent at hand. The old-timers said that he knocked out the soldiers' teeth more than once. He was especially merciless when he led the ride. Zhukov and others sensed this well during the short leave of the platoon commander. Wart, remaining behind the platoon leader, turned around with might and main. "And as soon as he did not mock the soldiers! - noted later Georgy Konstantinovich. - During the day I drove to the point of drop in the classroom, especially swaggering over those who lived and worked before being drafted in Moscow, because he considered them "literate" and too smart. And at night, he checked the inner outfit several times, caught the sleeping orderlies and beat them. The soldiers were pushed to the extreme. Having agreed, we somehow ambushed him in a dark corner and, throwing a blanket over his head, beat him until he lost consciousness. All of us could not have avoided a court-martial, but then our platoon commander returned, who settled everything, and then achieved the transfer of Wart to another squadron. ¹⁸ In the spring of 1916, a marching squadron began to be formed from the training team. However, this time Zhukov did not get to the front: thirty of the most

trained cavalrymen were selected to study as non-commissioned officers. The training team was located in the city of Izyum, Kharkov province. The senior non-commissioned officer of the training team, according to Zhukov, turned out to be worse than Borodavko. The soldiers nicknamed him "Four and a Half" because the index finger on his right hand was half as long. However, this did not prevent him from knocking down a soldier with his fist. "He didn't love me more than others, but for some reason he avoided beating me," Zhukov said. - But he pestered me for the slightest mistake, and even, just finding fault, subjected me to all sorts of punishments. No one so often stood "under the sword at full combat", did not drag so many sandbags from the stables to the camp tents and did not carry out duty on holidays as I did. I understood that all this was the malice of an extremely stupid and unkind person. But I was glad that he could not

¹⁷ Ibid. S. 68.

¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 68-69.

pick on me in class.”¹⁹

Convinced that Zhukov could not get through, "Four and a Half" decided to change tactics and offered him to become a freelance scribe, keep sheets of orders, report on classes and carry out other assignments. However, George, with his usual directness, replied that he was in the training team in order to study military affairs and become a non-commissioned officer. The reaction to this could be foreseen. In June, exams began in the training team. According to the existing procedure, the best one received the rank of junior non-commissioned officer upon graduation, and the rest were released as vice non-commissioned officers, that is, candidates for non-commissioned officer rank. Zhukov had no doubt that he would be the first in the team and would definitely receive the rank of junior non-commissioned officer upon graduation, and then the vacant position of a separated commander. However, two weeks before the release before the ranks, it was announced that he was expelled from the team for indiscipline and disloyal attitude towards his immediate superiors. "Four and a half" settled scores.

Help came unexpectedly. Volunteer Skorino interceded for him, who immediately went to the head of the training team and reported on the unfair attitude towards Zhukov. George went to the office of the team with great excitement - after all, he had never had to talk with officers before. To his surprise, he saw a man with soft eyes and a simple face. The head of the team, who served before the war as a sergeant-major of long-term service, received an officer's rank for bravery and was awarded an almost complete bow of St. George's crosses. He greeted Zhukov cordially and asked him to explain why in four months of training he had a dozen penalties and called his platoon commander "skin" and other bad words. George confirmed everything and truthfully told about the true reasons for this state of affairs. He was admitted to the exams, but still, when he graduated, he was not given the championship, and Zhukov left the training team on an equal footing with everyone else in the rank of vice non-commissioned officer.

It is not difficult to see that, recalling his first steps in military service, Zhukov does not really appreciate the order and the atmosphere that has developed in the Russian army. He noted a good level of training, especially drill, in the training teams, whose graduates were fluent in equestrianism, weapons and methods of training fighters. It is no coincidence that many non-commissioned officers of the Russian army after the October Revolution of 1917 became qualified military leaders of the Red Army. But “as for educational work, it was based on drill. Future non-commissioned officers were not taught the skills of human treatment of soldiers, they were not taught to delve into the soul of a soldier. One goal was pursued - for the soldier to be an obedient machine gun. Disciplinary practice was built on cruelty. Corporal punishment was not provided for by the charter, but in practice they were used quite widely.”²⁰

The non-commissioned officers were the main foundation on which the Russian army rested, they trained, educated and cemented

¹⁹ Ibid. S. 70.

²⁰ Ibid. S. 72.

soldier mass. "I must say that the officers of the units completely trusted the non-commissioned officers in the training and education of soldiers," noted Georgy Konstantinovich. - Such trust undoubtedly contributed to the development of independence, initiative, a sense of responsibility and strong-willed qualities among non-commissioned officers. In a combat situation, non-commissioned officers, especially regular officers, for the most part were good commanders. My many years of practice shows that where there is no trust in junior commanders, where there is constant guardianship of senior officers over them, there will never be real junior commanders, and consequently, there will be no good units either.²¹

One of the main problems of the Russian army during the First World War, according to G.K. Zhukov, was the lack of commonality and unity between the mass of soldiers and officers. True, during the war, when, due to heavy losses, the officer corps was staffed with representatives of the labor intelligentsia, literate workers and peasants, as well as soldiers and non-commissioned officers who distinguished themselves in battles, this disunity in units (up to and including a battalion or division) was somewhat smoothed out. However, it was completely preserved in military formations. Officers and generals, who had no closeness to the mass of soldiers, who did not know how a soldier lives and breathes, were alien to the soldier. This circumstance, as well as the widespread operational and tactical illiteracy of the higher officers and generals, led to the fact that these commanders, with rare exceptions, did not enjoy authority with the soldier.

How fair and objective was G.K. Zhukov in his judgments? A.A. Kersnovsky in his work "History

of the Russian Army" noted that for the soldiers of 1914, officers were senior members of the great military family of the regiment that raised them. Relations between the officers and soldiers of the Russian army were imbued with such simplicity and cordiality, the likes of which were not in any foreign army, and in no other strata of the Russian people. However, by the fourth year of the war, there were only five or six native officers per regiment, rarely more (usually in the positions of battalion commanders and heads of the economic department).²² Companies and teams consisted of 30–40 "wartime" officers, and the regiment commander, as a rule, was serving a fleeting qualification and had nothing to do with the regiment. The officer milieu was varied in composition, diverse in origin, and varied in quality. The old regimental family perished, a new one was not able to be created. The people saw only "gentlemen" in the officers, bringing into the barracks of reserve regiments, and from there into the trenches all the sharpness of the social contradictions and class strife that had grown in the country.

General A.I. Denikin in his memoirs critically assessed the state of the senior command staff by the end of 1916. "It must be said that not only the troops, but also the chiefs," he wrote, "receiving

²¹ Ibid. S. 73.

²² See: Kersnovsky A. A. History of the Russian army. In 4 vols. M.: Voice, 1994. T. 4. S. 247–248.

rarely and little information about actions at the front, they were poorly versed in general strategic combinations ... There is no need to add that the technical, professional knowledge of the command staff, due to the incorrect system of higher appointments and the strongest stratification of the officer corps by mobilizations, was not at the proper level."²³

Thus, Zhukov not only correctly assessed the state of affairs in the Russian army and its officer corps, but also revealed his fundamental views on military affairs, which he carried through his whole life. At the forefront were the closeness of the officer to the soldier and complete mutual understanding between them, the unconditional authority of the officer corps, the trust of junior commanders on the part of senior officers ...

In August 1916, vice non-commissioned officer Zhukov arrived as part of the replenishment in the 10th Novgorod Dragoon Regiment of the 10th Cavalry Division of the Southwestern Front. The division was concentrated in the Bystritsky mountainous wooded area, where it took a direct part in offensive battles, mainly on foot, since the conditions of the terrain did not allow horse attacks.

Soon the offensive fizzled out and the front stopped. A positional war began, accompanied by local battles and frequent sorties behind enemy lines. Georgy Zhukov also had to take part in the battles, mainly in reconnaissance sorties. Later, he admitted: "When I found myself in the war, at first there was some kind of uncertainty under shelling, but it quickly passed. Never leaned under bullets. I can't stand cowards." In October 1916, Zhukov, along with his comrades in reconnaissance on the outskirts of Saye Regen in the head patrol, ran into a mine and blew himself up. Two were seriously wounded, and Zhukov was thrown out of the saddle by an explosive wave. He woke up only a day later in the hospital. Due to a severe concussion, he was evacuated to Kharkov. After leaving the hospital, I still felt unwell for a long time and, most importantly, did not hear well. The medical commission sent Georgy Konstantinovich to a marching squadron in the village of Camps, where his friends from the recruit squadron had been stationed since the spring. Leaving the squadron as a young soldier, Zhukov returned here with non-commissioned officer badges, front-line experience and two St. George crosses on his chest, which he was awarded for capturing a German officer and shell shock. Recalling the last months on the eve of the February Revolution of 1917, G.K. Zhukov noted that in conversations with soldiers he realized that they were not eager to "sniff gunpowder" and did not want war. Rumors about strikes and strikes of workers in Petrograd,

Moscow and other cities began to circulate more and more stubbornly. They talked about the Bolsheviks, who are fighting against the tsar, for peace, for land and freedom for the working people.

Despite the fact that Zhukov was a non-commissioned officer, the soldiers treated him with confidence, and after the February Revolution he was elected chairman of the soldiers' squadron committee. In the summer, the squadron was transferred to the Savintsy station near Kharkov, where Zhukov found the October Revolution. In his autobiography of 1938, he noted: "Participation in the October coup was expressed in the fact that the squadron, under the leadership of the committee, stood on the platform of the Bolsheviks and refused

23 Denikin A.I. Essays on Russian Troubles. Paris, 1921, vol. 1, pp. 23–24.

“Ukrainize” (that is, turn into a Ukrainian national military unit subordinate to the Central Rada in Kyiv. – V.D.).”

Soon, by decision of the soldiers' committee, the squadron was disbanded to their homes. All soldiers were issued certificates certifying their dismissal from service, and it was recommended to take carbines and live ammunition with them. However, a barrage detachment in the Kharkov region confiscated weapons from most of the soldiers. Zhukov had to hide for several weeks in Balakliya and the village of Camps, as he was searched for by officers who had transferred to the service of Ukrainian nationalists. On November 30, 1917, he returned to Moscow, decided to rest for several months in his native village, and then join the Red Guard. The visit to his homeland almost ended tragically: he was first struck down by typhus, then by relapsing fever. A serious illness put him out of action for almost six months. At the end of September 1918, Zhukov arrived in Maloyaroslavets, where the recruiting station was

located. But due to the transferred typhus, he was not accepted into the Red Army. It was decided to go to Moscow and enlist in the army as a volunteer. True, in his autobiography of 1938 he noted: “In the Red Army - from the end of September 1918 on mobilization. He began his service in the 4th Moscow Regiment (cavalry) in October 1918.

In the service card of G.K. Zhukov, stored in the archive, it is noted that he joined the Red Army voluntarily on October 1, 1918. The division in which he was enlisted was formed on the basis of the order of the Supreme Military Council No. 54 of June 19, 1918 and was called the Cavalry Division of the Moscow Military District. In September, it was renamed the Moscow Cavalry Division. In its composition, the 4th Moscow Cavalry Regiment was formed.²⁴

By this time, Zhukov had already firmly connected himself with the Bolshevik Party, was in a group of sympathizers, preparing to join the RCP (b). “The group of sympathizers in the squadron,” he recalled, “consisted of five people, and, despite its small number, comrades Trofimov (secretary of the party bureau of the 4th Moscow cavalry regiment. - V.D.) and Volkov (commissar of the regiment. - V.D.) came to us at least twice a week to talk about the internal and international situation, about what the Party is doing on the fronts. These conversations dragged on for a long time and were very interesting, especially when it came to the struggle of the Bolsheviks against tsarism and the heated battles in the October days in Petrograd, Moscow and other industrial cities of the country ... On March 1, 1919, I was accepted as a member of the RCP (b). Much has now been forgotten, but the day when I was accepted as a member of the party remained in my memory for the rest of my life.”²⁵ One cannot exclude the possibility that on that day G.K. Zhukov was accepted only as a candidate, and not as a member

of the party. This point of view is shared, for example, by VG Krasnov, the author of the book “Unknown Zhukov. Laurels and thorns of the commander. Documentation. Opinions. Reflections”. He writes that he found a document in the archive that clearly states that Zhukov was accepted from among candidates for membership in the RCP (b), and this happened after 8

²⁴ See: Svishchev V.N. G.K. Zhukov on the fronts of the Civil War in the Volga region // Military historical magazine. 1996. No. 6. S. 44.

²⁵ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 94–95.

May 1920, since the previous protocol (No. 9) dates exactly this number.

In May 1919, the Moscow Cavalry Division was transferred from Moscow to the Samara region, where it became part of the Southern Army Group of the Eastern Front, commanded by M.V. Frunze. By this time, the troops of Admiral A.V. Kolchak reached the approaches to Samara and Kazan. At the same time, anti-Bolshevik uprisings broke out in the rear of the Eastern Front, and the Cossack units surrounded Uralsk on May 9. Having a significant superiority in cavalry, the enemy continued to develop an offensive against Saratov and Samara. The commander of the Eastern Front, former General A.A. Samoilov, demanded that M.V. Frunze "strain all efforts to quickly suppress the

uprisings in the Ural and Orenburg regions and secure these areas for us, for which the 3rd brigade of the 33rd division, Moscow a cavalry division, two regiments of the Samara Work Brigade and the Kazan Muslim Regiment." On May 26/17, units of the Moscow Cavalry Division arrived at the Ershov station, which was a junction not only of railways, but also of dirt roads, which gave it special importance militarily. Here, parts of the division began preparations for an offensive against Uralsk. On May 21, Frunze ordered the commander of the 4th Army, K. A. Avksentievskii, to concentrate in the area of the Shipovo railway station, in addition to "parts of the Plyasunkov detachment, the 3rd brigade of the 33rd rifle division and the 1st cavalry division, to launch a decisive offensive in order to defeat the main enemy forces operating in the area west of Uralsk, and release the units of the 22nd Infantry Division besieged in Uralsk ...".²⁷ In the Shipovo area (about 100 kilometers west of Uralsk), G.K. Zhukov took his first battle with the Ural Cossacks. In early June, about eight hundred Cossacks attacked the positions of the 4th Moscow Cavalry Regiment. Despite the swiftness of the attack, the Red Army managed to deploy a gun and open artillery fire, which caused confusion in the ranks of the enemy. In the meantime, not far from the Shipovo station, the red squadrons and the Cossack hundreds met in a fierce battle. After a desperate felling, the Cossacks finally

could not withstand the onslaught and retreated. But military happiness is changeable. The commander of the Ural Cossack army, General V.S. Tolstov, threw reserves into battle. In mid-June, the enemy captured the Shipovo station, and at the end of the month, Nikolaevsk, and continued to develop his offensive in a northwestern direction. There were 50–60 kilometers to the Volga. However, in fierce battles, units of the Special Brigade, the 25th Infantry Division and two regiments of the 3rd Cavalry Division defeated the Cossacks and united with the Uralsk garrison.

"During the battles for Uralsk, I was lucky to see Mikhail Vasilyevich Frunze," recalled G.K. Zhukov. He then personally supervised the entire operation. M.V. Frunze went with V.V. Kuibyshev to the 25th Chapaev division. He stopped in the field and spoke to the soldiers

²⁶ Directives of the command of the fronts of the Red Army (1917–1922). In 4 vols. M., 1972. T. 2. S. 676.

²⁷ M.V. Frunze on the Eastern Front: Collection of documents. Kuibyshev, 1985, p. 139.

of our regiment, being interested in their mood, food, weapons, he asked what relatives from the villages were writing, what wishes the fighters had. His simplicity and charm, pleasant appearance won the hearts of the fighters ... Later we often recalled this meeting ... "28 Georgy Konstantinovich's acquaintance with the

division commissar, his namesake G.V. Zhukov, also belongs to this period. He, apparently, looked closely at the young party member - a literate man and versed in politics, besides an experienced cavalryman who showed himself excellently in battles - and in one of the conversations he suggested that he become a political worker. However, G.K. Zhukov refused, answering that he was more inclined towards military service. Then the commissioner promised to send him to the courses of the red commanders.

But this plan was not destined to come true. On September 6, the Moscow Cavalry Division was included in the Tsaritsyn strike group and the next day received the task of crossing to the right bank of the Volga, in order to attack Tsaritsyn from the south together with the 7th Cavalry and 34th Infantry Divisions. Heavy battles unfolded with constantly attacking Cossack and infantry units of the enemy. Having a numerical superiority, they pushed the Red Army men to Cherny Yar, which was soon blocked from land. In this situation, the regiments of the Moscow Cavalry Division moved to the left bank of the Volga in the Vladimirovka region. Denikin sought to transfer the fighting to the Volga region in order to unite with the Ural army and form a united front. In this regard, Frunze set the

task for the 11th Army: "By all means, hold Cherny Yar and prevent the enemy from crossing to the left bank of the Volga. Continue concentrating units and crossing them for a new offensive along the right bank of the Volga, with the aim of assisting the 10th Army in capturing the Tsaritsyn area. 29 At the same time, the 4th Moscow Cavalry Regiment was ordered to be urgently sent to the disposal of the 11th Army.

On October 26, the enemy crossed the Volga near the Bukatin farm and the village of Nizhne-Pogromnoye, occupied the villages of Bezrodnoye and Sredne Akhtubinsky, and launched an offensive south along the Akhtuba River. The 2nd and 3rd regiments of the division, the rifle units of the 11th Army, were sent to help the 4th cavalry regiment, which entered into battle with the enemy. But the attack could not be stopped. In one of the battles in hand-to-hand combat with the Cossacks, Georgy Konstantinovich was wounded by fragments of a hand grenade, which deeply cut into his left leg and left side.

From the battlefield he was carried out on a cloak by the political instructor of the squadron, the old Bolshevik Anton Mitrofanovich Yanin, also wounded. On a cart, he took Zhukov to the infirmary in Saratov, where a good friend of Yanina, Polina Nikolaevna Volokhova, worked. Polina Nikolaevna took care of Yanin, and her younger sister, a young schoolgirl Maria, began to take care of Zhukov, who she clearly liked. In the hospital, Zhukov was unlucky: he fell ill with typhus again. Maria did not leave him for a whole month. And as often happens in such cases, love arose between them. George

28 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 94.

29 Svishchev V.N. G.K. Zhukov on the fronts of the Civil War in the Volga region // Military historical magazine. 1996. No. 6. S. 45.

Konstantinovich courted Maria with great tenderness. The grandson of Maria Nikolaevna Georgy, named after his grandfather, recalled: "Grandfather told me that he had already fallen in love with his grandmother. For her mercy and wonderful blue eyes ... Thanks to them ... her affectionate nickname appeared - "Forget-Me-Not" ".

After recovering, Zhukov received a month's leave and went to his native village. And the Volokhov sisters returned to Poltava, where they were from. The romance of George and Maria, which grew into a serious relationship, resumed only three years later, already in Minsk.

The month has flown by. Returning to service, Georgy Konstantinovich did not get into the 4th Moscow Cavalry Regiment: he was sent to Tver to the reserve cavalry division, and from there he was sent to the 1st Ryazan Cavalry Command Courses of the Red Army.

The courses were located in the village of Starozhilovo, Ryazan province, in the building of the former estate. On March 16, 1920, the credentials committee decided to admit Zhukov to the courses, and the next day, by order, he was enrolled in the 1st preparatory department.³⁰ Zhukov studied well: in hygiene,

military administration, political literacy and charters - "excellent". On April 30, by decision of the Pedagogical Council, he was transferred to a special department.

During his studies, Zhukov took an active part in the work of the party cell, and the surviving documents testify to his adherence to principles and directness in judgments and actions. This was especially clearly manifested during an extraordinary meeting of the party cell, at which the question of the fate of its chairman, Stavenkov, was discussed. Togo was intended to be seconded from the courses because the sentry fell asleep during his duty. Stavenkov was also attacked by cadet Valaitis for reporting to the political department of the GUVUZ (Main Directorate of Military Educational Institutions. - V.D.) and allegedly for misappropriating the salary of a Red Army soldier. After Stavenkov's explanations, members of the party cell Mikhailov and Zhukov stood up for him, while the latter asked the commissar of courses: why were the red officers who arrived from the front an attestation commission, while the red commanders were not subject to attestation? Then Zhukov made a proposal to "recognize as unfair the secondment of comrade. Stavenkov, a good party worker and a good construction worker, who served as an example for all courses. This proposal was adopted unanimously with one abstention. Zhukov also proposed expelling Valaitis "from the cell, because the latter behaves defiantly, at every meeting of the cell goes against every resolution and in general does not behave like a communist."³¹ As a result, the cell decided to expel Valaitis from the cell, to petition to expel him from the party before the Central Committee, let the political department of the GUVUZ know and publish information about it

in newspapers.

With his attitude to learning, assertiveness and exactingness

³⁰ Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. Laurels and thorns of the commander. Documentation. Opinions. Reflections. M., 2000. S. 24.

³¹ Ibid. pp. 27–28.

Zhukov endeared himself to the command and cadets. So, in June, he was included in the sanitary troika "to monitor the sanitary condition of the courses", and later - in the mandate commission "for a more thorough verification of the compliance of each cadet and those received over the past two months."

However, it is difficult to imagine a cadet without sins. "Cadet comrade Georgy Zhukov (foreman of the 1st squadron), who left at the disposal of the Ryazgubvoenkomb, was noted in the order for courses dated July 31, 1920, seconded for violating military discipline, to be excluded from the lists of courses for cadets of the 1st squadron from July 29".³² Georgy Konstantinovich was expelled for only a week, since already on August 5 he was again accepted for courses. It is not known what violation was in question, but it was probably serious, otherwise such a severe violation would not have followed.

punishment.

Remembering the time of study at the courses, Georgy Konstantinovich noticed many important features of the first difficult years of building the Red Army. "Combat command cadres consisted mainly of old military specialists - officers. They worked conscientiously, but somewhat formally - "from" and "to". The educational work was carried out by the political organization and the political apparatus of the courses, general education was carried out by paramilitary teachers. Political and economic disciplines were taught by hastily trained teachers, who themselves often "swam" in these matters no worse than us sinners. General education of the bulk of the cadets was insufficient. After all, they were recruited from among the workers and peasants, who were illiterate before the revolution. But, we must give them their due, they studied

diligently, realizing that the training period is short, and you need to learn a lot in order to become a worthy red commander. On August 10, 1920, 120 people from the 1st Ryazan Cavalry Command Courses, including G.K. Zhukov, were sent to the 2nd Moscow Rifle Brigade. In mid-August, the cadets were loaded onto a train that followed to Moscow. All were placed in the Lefortovo barracks, where there were already Tver and

Moscow cadets. It was announced that they would become part of the 2nd Moscow brigade of cadets, which was sent to the "Wrangel front".

The combined cadet cavalry regiment (regiment commander G.P. Khormushko, commissar V.A. Krylov) of the 2nd Moscow brigade of cadets was included in the 9th Kuban Army of the Caucasian Front and concentrated in Yekaterinodar, from where it set out to liquidate the landing of General S. G. Ulagaya. The commander of the Russian army, General P.N. Wrangel, had high hopes for this landing. In the Crimea, the army could not get any serious replenishment. Therefore, they counted on the Kuban Cossacks and the Russian Renaissance Army, General M.A. Fostikov. But Wrangel miscalculated: his landing on the Kuban and Fostikov's detachments in August-September were defeated, and their remnants were evacuated to the Crimea. G.K. Zhukov also took part in these battles.

³² Ibid. S. 30.

³³ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 105.

After the liquidation of the Wrangel landing, the most trained cadets passed their exams ahead of schedule at the field headquarters of the 9th Kuban Army in Armavir. Most of them, including Zhukov, were sent to the cavalry brigade of the 14th rifle division named after A.K. Stepin, which fought to eliminate local rebel groups. On November 1, Georgy Konstantinovich arrived at a new duty station and was appointed to the post of platoon commander of the 1st Cavalry Regiment. The platoon was handed over to him by Agapov, in the past an ordinary cavalryman of the Russian army, a participant in the First World War. He met

Zhukov kindly, spoke in detail about each Red Army soldier, who, with the exception of three or four people, had combat experience. During the formation of a platoon, some fighters defiantly looked at the red trousers of the new commander. Zhukov noticed this and said: "The regimental commander Andreev has already warned me that you do not like red trousers. I don't have any others, you know. I wear what the Soviet government gave me, and so far I am indebted to it. As for the red color in general, it is known to be a revolutionary color and it symbolizes the struggle of the working people for their freedom and independence."³⁴ Soon the new platoon commander happened to lead his subordinates into battle against the rebels in the Black Sea region. It was Zhukov's baptism of fire as a commander of the Red Army. The platoon won the battle, partly destroying the

rebels, partly taking them prisoner, without losing a single person. The young, energetic painter was noticed and appointed commander of the 2nd squadron of the 1st cavalry regiment of the 14th separate cavalry brigade, which was sent to eliminate the peasant uprising in the Tambov province.

At this time, an important event occurred in the personal life of twenty-four-year-old Georgy Zhukov - he met Alexandra Dievna Zuykova. "She was born in 1900 in the village of Anna, Voronezh Region," said the daughter of G.K. The name Diy was given to his son by his father, a volost clerk, having met this rare name in some papers. They lived in poverty. But my mother managed to finish the gymnasium, and then teacher courses. After working for a short time in a village school, she met with her father, whose detachment in those years was sent to the Voronezh region (at that time the province. - V.D.) to fight the Antonov gang, and in 1920 she became his wife. G.K. Zhukov, who worked on his memoirs in the 60s of the last century, interpreted the causes of the peasant uprising in the Tambov region in the spirit of the official historiography of that time: "SR-kulak uprising",

which set as its goal the overthrow of Soviet power, and the immediate task was to disrupt food requisitions, the destruction of representatives of the RCP (b) and the Soviet government, attacks on small detachments of the Red Army in order to disarm them, damage to railways, destruction of warehouses and bases. However, even if Zhukov had the relevant documents, at that time he would not have been allowed to tell the truth about the uprising in the Tambov province. Now we are well aware of the exorbitant surplus appropriation, excesses, violence and arbitrariness of local authorities and

³⁴ Ibid. T. 1. S. 110.

food detachments in relation to the peasants, who constituted the absolute majority of the population of the Tambov region. The food detachments took their bread by force, subjected them to torture: they lowered them into wells, poured water into their boots and left them in the cold, burned their beards with fire. The uprising broke out at the end of August

1920, which was a complete surprise for the Union of Labor Peasants (STK), led by the Social Revolutionaries. The Provincial Committee of the STK adopted a resolution on the prematureness and futility of open armed struggle at the moment. Then a thirty-year-old independent socialist-revolutionary appeared on the arena, an active participant in various kinds of expropriations of money for the needs of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party A.S. Antonov, who in 1918 was the head of the militia of the Kirsanov district. He united the disparate detachments into popular armies. At the disposal of the Main Operational Headquarters of the rebels were over 20 regiments and a separate brigade. In January 1921, about 50 thousand people took part in the uprising, but only a part of them were armed with machine guns, rifles, revolvers and checkers. The rebels used the tactics and methods of guerrilla warfare, smashed state farms, killed party and Soviet workers. The rebels were opposed by local formations of communists, Red Army detachments, special forces, cadets of military educational institutions of the Red Army and schools of the Cheka. But due to the lack of organization

and indecision of the local military command, their actions were not successful. Therefore, to eliminate Antonov's army, the headquarters of the troops of the Tambov province was created, which by June 1921 consisted of up to 43 thousand bayonets and sabers. At the beginning of May, the former nobleman and lieutenant M.N. Pugachevsky was appointed commander of the troops, his deputy was former lieutenant I.P. Uborevich (Uboryavichyus), and the chief of staff was former colonel N.E. Kakurin.

Recalling that time, Zhukov wrote: "We heard a lot of good things about Mikhail Nikolayevich Tukhachevsky, especially about his operational strategic abilities, and the soldiers were glad that such a talented commander would lead them. For the first time I saw M.N. Tukhachevsky at the Zherdevka station, in the Tambov region, where he arrived at the headquarters of our 14th separate cavalry brigade. I happened to be present at his conversation with the brigade commander. In the judgments of M.N. Tukhachevsky, great knowledge and experience in managing large-scale operations were felt. "35

Today it is known what methods the units of the Red Army and the Cheka used to suppress the uprising. In accordance with the decisions of the Plenipotentiary Commission of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Chairman V. A. Antonov-Ovseenko), the troops of the Tambov province widely used the method of occupation of the regions of the uprising, the hostage system, created a network of concentration camps (by mid-July 1921, there were more than 9.3 thousand people), they shot relatives of rebels in front of local residents, burned recalcitrant villages.³⁶ At the same time, among the population

35 Ibid. T. 1. S. 112.

36 Russian State Military Archive. (Hereinafter - RGVA.) F. 235. Op. 2. D. 13. L. 42.

extensive explanatory work was carried out in order to familiarize him with the agrarian policy of the Soviet government. The Red Army soldiers assisted the peasants in carrying out the sowing campaign, in plowing the fields, and in repairing agricultural implements. This played a certain positive role and contributed to the voluntary surrender of the rebels and deserters. However, the main means of fighting the insurgents was

military force.

In the second half of May 1921, the troops of the Tambov province began operations to defeat the rebels. Within ten days, the 2nd People's Army was defeated, the remnants of which took refuge in the forests. In order to clear the forests from the rebels, the command of the troops of the Tambov province used asphyxiating gases in June. This measure was approved by the Commission for Combating Banditry under the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic, which advised resorting to gas attacks "with the greatest caution, with sufficient technical training and only in cases of complete success."³⁷ Parts of the 1st People's Army managed to withdraw to the Don, then Voronezh province, but on June 20, near the city of Uryupinsk, it was also defeated.

Zhukov remembered several combat episodes in Tambovshina. On the morning of March 5, 1921, he woke up early and, standing on the porch, took a deep breath of fresh air with pleasure. Suddenly, a rider appeared at the end of the village. He abruptly reined in his horse in front of the porch and shouted: "Antonovites!" The 1st Cavalry Regiment was alerted: reconnaissance reported that a large enemy grouping of up to three thousand sabers was concentrated 10–15 versts from the village of Vyazovaya Pochta. Two regiments were tasked with destroying the rebels. Georgy Konstantinovich's squadron, which was given four machine guns and a gun, marched at the forefront of the 1st Cavalry Regiment. After half an hour of march, the squadron unexpectedly stumbled upon the Antonovites. Having deployed a squadron and opened machine-gun and cannon fire, Zhukov led the Red Army soldiers to attack. The rebels could not withstand the swift blow and retreated, suffering losses.

In this battle, Zhukov almost died. "During a hand-to-hand fight, one Antonov soldier killed a horse under me with a shot from a sawn-off shotgun," he recalled. - Falling, the horse crushed me, I would have been inevitably hacked to death if political instructor Nochevka had not come to the rescue. With a strong blow of the blade, he cut down the bandit and, grabbing the reins of his horse, helped me into the saddle.

Soon we noticed a column of enemy cavalry, trying to outflank the squadron. They immediately deployed all fire weapons against them and sent to report to the regiment commander on the current situation. After 20–30 minutes, our regiment moved forward and started a firefight."³⁸

Around the same time, the 2nd cavalry regiment of the 14th separate cavalry brigade also entered the battle, but due to the superiority of the enemy forces, it was forced to retreat. The rebels decided to attack the 1st Cavalry Regiment with all their might, and first of all Zhukov's head squadron, which now acted as a rearguard, covering the exit

³⁷ See: Peasant uprising in the Tambov province in 1919–1921. ("Antonovshina"): Documents and materials. Tambov, 1994, p. 185.

³⁸ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 114.

regiment from battle. "The battle was extremely difficult for us," Zhukov recalled. "The enemy saw that we were in a significant minority, and was sure that he would crush us. However, this was not so easy to implement. It was saved by the fact that the squadron had 4 heavy machine guns with a large supply of cartridges and a 76-mm gun. Maneuvering machine guns and guns, the squadron almost point-blank shot at the attacking formations of the enemy. We saw how the battlefield was covered with enemy corpses, and slowly, step by step, with a fight retreated back ... "39

Already in the village itself, saving a machine gun, Georgy Konstantinovich rushed at a group of rebels. A horse was killed by a shot from a rifle under him for the second time that day. With a revolver and a saber in his hands, he had to fight off the pressing rebels who were trying to take him alive. Again, the political instructor Nochevka saved us, jumping up with the fighters in time. The courage and

courage of Zhukov were noted in the order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic dated August 31, 1922 No. 183: "The commander of the 2nd squadron of the 1st cavalry regiment of a separate cavalry brigade was awarded the Order of the Red Banner for being in a battle near the village of Vyazovaya Pochta, Tambov province on March 5 In 1921, despite enemy attacks with a force of 1500-2000 sabers, he with a squadron held back the enemy's onslaught for 7 hours and, then going on a counterattack, after 6 hand-to-hand fights defeated the gang.

In the fall of 1921, Zhukov's squadron participated in the defeat of Zverev's detachment, which consisted of about 150 sabers. For several days, the squadron pursued the rebels who tried to hide in the forests. Finally, the Red Army overtook them and forced them to take the fight. "Shortly before that, I had an exceptional horse," G.K. Zhukov told the writer K.M. Simonov. — I took it in battle, shooting the owner. And so, pursuing the Antonovites with my squadron, I saw that they turned towards them. The corresponding command followed, we rushed forward, on the attack. I didn't keep the horse. He carried me a hundred paces ahead of the entire squadron. At first everything went well, the Antonovites began to retreat. During the pursuit, I noticed, as it seemed to me, that one of their commanders along the snowy path - it was already snowing - was leaving for the edge of the forest. I follow him. He is from me ... I catch up with him, I see that with his right hand he is whipping the horse with a whip, and the saber is in his sheath. I caught up with him and instead of shooting, in a fever, he rushed at him with a saber. He whipped the horse on the right side, then on the left side, and at the moment when I swung the saber, the whip turned out to be on his left. Whipping, he threw it and right on the move, without a swing taking out a saber from its scabbard, slashed me. I didn't even have time to close, my saber was still raised, and he had already cut, with an instant, completely imperceptible movement for me, he took it out of its scabbard and, at the same turn, hit me across the chest. I was wearing a sheepskin coat covered with cloth, a saber belt, a pistol belt, a binocular belt on my chest. He crossed all these belts, cut through the cloth on the short fur coat, the short fur coat and knocked me out of the saddle with this blow. And if my political officer, who hacked him to death with a saber, had not arrived here, it would have been bad for me ... Then for another half a month my chest hurt from his blow. 40

39 Ibid. pp. 114–115.

40 Cit. by: Simonov K. M. Notes on the biography of G.K. Zhukov // Military History magazine. 1987. No. 11. S. 41.

... The long-term military whirlwind subsided. Combat awards and scars, invaluable front-line experience - an important, but not the most important result of these years. Possessing a solid and solid character, Zhukov did not get entangled in the turmoil of complex events of a turning point era and clearly chose his path in life.

Chapter III. Learn in Suvorov

Portrait of the squadron commander: "He was short, but stocky. His gaze is calm, unobtrusive, but tenacious, evaluating. There was no sense of stiffness in the posture of the commander, but I also did not feel that natural relaxation that a person leading a casual table conversation can afford. His movements were restrained. He was probably very strong physically, and in the restraint of his every gesture I felt the developed habit of constantly controlling himself, which is characteristic of strong-willed, internally disciplined people. I immediately felt that my squadron commander was a real military bone ... "G.K. Zhukov left such an impression on his foreman, who, after the liquidation of the uprising in the Tambov province, was appointed commander of the 2nd squadron of the 38th Stavropol cavalry regiment of the 7th Samara cavalry divisions.

About the activities of Zhukov in this post, A.L. Kronik left a number of interesting evidence, which is not a sin to use.

At that time, when training young cavalymen, traditional, frankly, draconian methods of teaching the art of riding and using weapons were still often used. Zhukov resolutely did not allow this in his squadron. He did not tolerate mockery of people and believed that it was vile and unworthy for a red commander to humiliate and insult a person just because he was lower in his official position and therefore did not dare to answer. Largely thanks to Zhukov, the squadron developed excellent comradely relations between fighters and commanders, which contributed to the strengthening of reasonable discipline and diligence. With a new addition to the squadron, a quiet, downtrodden, frightened, unprepossessing peasant guy came. Nothing worked out for him, and he was even afraid of his own horse, and he, seeing his rider, bared his teeth and did not let him near him.

Upon learning of this, Zhukov advised the foreman to teach the fighter the Suvorov way. At a puzzled look, Kronika explained: "Suvorov said: the soldiers are afraid to go on guard together at night - send him alone. It is necessary to leave a person alone with his own fear, then he will overcome fear. The method is harsh, but this is how a person is brought up. Yes, and Zhukov himself found an opportunity to talk with the unlucky guy: "Do not be afraid of the horse. Warhorse is your first friend. You are not a fighter without a horse. What do you need to do to make your horse love you? - Treat him with trust, not with fear ... And with affection - the horse loves affection. Give him bread, sometimes sugar." And several times Zhukov spoke with this fighter. It seems that by chance he would come up, say a few words, and after that the boy seemed to grow taller, straightened his shoulders. And not so much

time passed, but as if they had replaced it: a good fighter became, dexterous, diligent. There were no

trifles for Zhukov, with meticulousness he delved into all aspects of the life of the squadron. For many, Georgy Konstantinovich was more than just a caring and strict commander - one felt a spiritual attraction to him. "He was an extremely restrained person in personal relationships with everyone, especially with subordinates," recalled A.L. Kronik, "and this manifested his understanding of responsibility for his subordinates and understanding of his role not only as a combat commander, but also as an educator. He could quite naturally and simply sit down in the circle of the Red Army in the evening and imperceptibly enter into a conversation as an ordinary participant; he could pick up an accordion and play something according to his mood (later he took the button accordion in his hands much less often, but his love for a good and unpretentious song and for playing the button accordion remained with him until the end of his days); could appreciate a vigorous soldier's joke, but did not like vulgarity. He was simple, but he never allowed for familiarity and never confused confidentiality with familiarity. He felt all these shades of human relationships with his natural, natural instinct, which can only exist in a person with a healthy moral foundation. And therefore, his commanding and human authority was

indisputable, respect for him was unshakable, no matter how strict or cool he sometimes was. Zhukov's familiar command in the classroom with junior commanders: "Do as I do!" On the parade ground were placed seven or eight machines with a vine stuck in, on the highest machine - a hill of wet clay. Rush at a gallop - all targets are hit. Zhukov was also excellent at bayonet fighting. The rifle in his

hands felt as light as a feather. He overcame wire barriers with surprising ease and speed; blows with a butt and injections with a bayonet delivered unexpected, strong, well-aimed.

Zhukov raised a squadron at any time, made marches with him, taught personnel to conduct reconnaissance, attack, and maneuver. He believed that field training was the best form of study. He did not like to postpone or revise the outlined plans, and he did not like to cancel his own orders at all. He was firmly of the opinion: it is better not to give an order at all than to cancel one given. Already in February 1923, Zhukov's squadron distinguished itself at the regimental review,

and in March, during the inspection, it took first place in the division in all respects, for which he received gratitude from the commander of the Western Front, M.N. Tukhachevsky. The young commander was noticed and promoted. On April 24, he accepted the post of assistant commander of the 40th Buguruslan Cavalry Regiment, and on July 8 he took temporary command of the 39th Buzuluk Cavalry Regiment of the 7th Samara Cavalry Division, which was stationed in the Gomel region. The regiment was in a deplorable state, as can be judged from the report of Zhukov dated October 1, 1923 to the commander of the division G.D. Gayu.⁴¹ This man, who had an outstanding military talent, had

⁴¹ See: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 49–53.

the future commander of a huge impact. He himself took part in the First World War with the rank of ensign. In 1918 he joined the Red Army. During the Civil War, he commanded the Red Guard detachment, the 1st consolidated Simbirsk infantry division (later the 24th rifle division), the 1st army of the Eastern Front, then the 42nd rifle, 1st Caucasian cavalry divisions, from March 1920 - 2 -m, from July -3rd cavalry corps. During the Soviet-Polish war, Guy's corps was interned in East Prussia. After returning to Russia, Guy graduated from the Higher Academic Courses in 1922 and became commander of the 7th Samara Cavalry Division. Subsequently, he graduated from the Military Academy. M.V. Frunze, postgraduate student under her, was People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs of the Armenian SSR, commanded a division and corps, taught at the Military Academy. M.V. Frunze, then headed the department of the history of wars and military art of the Air Force Academy. N.E. Zhukovsky. In 1937 he was convicted on false charges and executed on December 1. Rehabilitated in 1956. The first meeting between Zhukov and Guy took place in the field in the camp tent, where the commanders and commissars of the units were called for a meeting. After the official presentation, the division commander invited everyone to sit around his desk. "I saw a handsome

man, smart in a military way. His eyes shone with benevolence, and his even and calm voice testified to a balanced character and self-confidence. I heard a lot about the heroic deeds of G. D. Guy and peered into him with interest. I wanted to penetrate into his spiritual world, to understand him as a person and a commander."⁴² It should be noted that Zhukov always felt and understood talented military leaders, constantly striving to absorb their best qualities. And already in his mature years, having surpassed many with his own military talent, he spoke of them with great, sincere respect as his teachers.

Analyzing the state of the regiment in his report to the division commander, Zhukov noted the inability of the units to deploy into the lava, poor knowledge of shooting, unfamiliarity with the latest military equipment and troops of other branches, unsatisfactory training of junior command staff. Among the reasons that had a negative impact on the training of personnel were the non-barracks quartering of the regiment, untimely and insufficient supply of uniforms, mainly shoes and overcoats. The report details what exercises were carried out in the summer to improve the training of the regiment. It was noted that "5

trips were made to the field for bilateral exercises (regiment against regiment) with the following tasks: to break through the enemy outpost, to guard and defend against the advancing enemy, night combat on foot (breakthrough of the enemy outpost), covering our retreating units (rearguard battles), oncoming battle. Of the above tasks, four regiments were completed successfully and with success, the fifth was lost. Part of the personnel went through "chamber fumigation and field fumigation by releasing gases from cylinders and undermining chemical

⁴² Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 129.

artillery shells."

In addition, the fighters and commanders visually got acquainted with the operation of flamethrowers and with the structure of

airplanes. During the camp period, G.K. Zhukov demanded that squadron commanders make the most of the field conditions for putting together units, educating cavalry stamina, and teaching them how to act in any situation. He paid special attention to the development of initiative and diligence both among the command and rank and file, on a fair attitude towards the Red Army soldiers. At the same time, the strengthening of military discipline was put at the forefront. "It has been noticed, especially in recent times, that squadron commanders often file reports on the imposition of

disciplinary sanctions on Red Army soldiers for various kinds of misconduct," the order for the regiment of August 23, 1923 says. - The reports indicate only the dry fact of the crimes of the Red Army, without any comprehensive coverage of the circumstances under which this or that offense was committed, which makes it impossible to judge the guilt of the Red Army. I order: 1) Squadron commanders and team leaders in the future, when reporting on the imposition of penalties on Red Army soldiers for misconduct, be sure to attach the investigative material produced with their conclusion, since reports without investigative

material will not

be considered and will be returned back ... "43

From the documents of this period it is clearly seen what an important role Zhukov assigned to the recruitment and training of intelligence units, considering intelligence officers as the elite of a military unit.⁴⁴

On August 28, by order of the division headquarters, the 39th Buzuluk Cavalry Regiment was withdrawn in full strength for review. Guy on a white-legged black horse climbed a hillock and closely followed the actions of the regiment. "The teaching went first on voice commands," Zhukov recalled, "then on commands with a checker (the so-called "silent teaching"), then on trumpet signals. Changeovers, movements, entries, turns, stops and alignments were performed more clearly than I expected. In conclusion, the regiment was deployed "into the lava" (the old Cossack attack method), and I directed the center of the battle formation to the height where the divisional commander was stationed. Having closed the regiment to the center and leveled it, I galloped to the division commander to report on the end of the show. 45

Guy, without even letting Zhukov begin his report, thanked him and the regiment's personnel for the work done. Then, accompanied by the regiment commander, he inspected the camp, talked with the cavalymen, telling combat episodes from the history of the Civil War.

Zhukov's regiment was once visited by the illustrious hero of the Civil War, V.K. Familiarized with the organization of food for personnel,

43 See: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 46.

44 Ibid. S. 45

45 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 129–130.

going around all the dormitories and cultural and educational institutions, he asked the regiment commander how things were going with combat training. Zhukov replied that the regiment's personnel understood their task well and were always ready to fulfill their military duty. Blucher praised him for such readiness and ordered to give the regiment an "alarm" signal. An hour later, the regiment was assembled in the location area. Blucher examined the weapons and equipment of the riders, the general combat readiness. He checked the machine-gun squadron with particular care and made a rather serious remark to one machine-gun crew, which, as it should be on alarm, had not filled the machine gun with water and had no supply of it.

Every week the divisional commander held war games on the cards. At the debriefing of these games, Guy criticized those who do little to improve their knowledge, and spoke warmly about the commanders who do a lot of self-training. The latter fully applied to the commander of the 39th regiment. "... In practical matters, I then felt stronger than in matters of theory, since I received good training during the First World War," Zhukov recalled. - He knew the methodology of combat training well and was fond of it. In the field of theory, I understood that I was lagging behind the demands that life itself makes of me as a regiment commander. Reflecting, I came to the conclusion: without wasting time, we must study hard. Well, what about the regiment, which must be given twelve hours a day in order to be in time everywhere and everywhere? There was only one way out: to add to the general working schedule of the day another three or four hours for independent study, and as for sleep, rest - nothing, we will rest when we gain knowledge. 46

In September 1923, the big autumn maneuvers began. Their participant A.L. Kronik spoke about the actions of the regiment as follows: "... Our 39th Buzuluk cavalry regiment was in the forefront of the main forces. On the approach to Orsha, around which the main forces of the "enemy" occupied positions, our commander skillfully and boldly solved a difficult combat mission. On bad autumn roads, the regiment made a march, overcame a hundred kilometers in thirty hours and unexpectedly fell on the flank and rear of the "enemy" infantry. With this bold attack, the regiment preempted the main forces of the "enemy" in the deployment, created the prerequisites for a successful offensive on a wide front, and the command urgently developed this success, throwing the entire 7th Samara division after us to break through. As a result of this battle, the commander of the front, M.N. Tukhachevsky, gave the regiment and its commander G.K. Zhukov a very high rating. After the completion of the maneuvers, the city of Minsk became the permanent quartering of the 7th

Samara Cavalry Division. At the end of November, the placement of personnel in the barracks ended (before that, the regiment was quartered in private houses) and regular scheduled classes resumed. The tone in studies, as always, was set by Zhukov, who in December, from acting commander of the regiment, became his full commander. Making the highest demands on all fighters and commanders, he constantly emphasized the importance of training and education of junior command personnel. This can be judged from the detailed order for the regiment of March 18, 1924,⁴⁷ in which the requirement "in no way

46 Ibid. S. 134.

47 Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 54–55.

case, avoid familiarity, partiality and currying of cheap authority, which is the main evil among poorly trained command personnel and commanders of the Red Army who are unconscious of their high duties. Perhaps, these words express the most important credo of Zhukov both as a military leader and as a person.

He has a tough demand for violations of military discipline. One of the orders reads: "From the material of inquiry presented to me by the investigator of the regiment, it is clear that the Red Army soldiers of the 1st squadron Zhmurin and Samulevich make a number of unauthorized absences from the barracks, a number of malicious non-fulfillment of legally given orders, and therefore, on the basis of the investigative material of the Red Army soldiers available on them 1 1st squadron Zhmurin and Samulevich I bring to trial the Military Tribunal of the Western Front for a number of unauthorized absences and for malicious failure to comply with legally given orders.

48 Sometimes Zhukov's exactingness grew into

unreasonable severity, which caused dissatisfaction among some of his subordinates. Complaints were sent to higher headquarters, and they had to be dealt with. But attempts to influence Zhukov did not bring tangible results. Years will pass, and he admits: "Looking back, I think that sometimes I really was unnecessarily demanding and was not always restrained and tolerant of the actions of subordinates. I was unbalanced by this or that dishonesty in work, in the behavior of a serviceman. Some did not understand this, and I, in turn, apparently, was not sufficiently indulgent to human weaknesses. Of course, now these mistakes have become more visible, life experience teaches a lot. However, even now I believe that no one has been given the right to enjoy life at the expense of the work of another ... "49

And yet it must be admitted that Zhukov himself does not deny that the formation of the regiment entrusted to him was difficult and it was not always possible to achieve the desired. The report submitted to the division headquarters on April 17, 1924, clearly depicts a picture of how the training of personnel took place in the winter period.⁵⁰ medical commissions ... desertion of the Red Army soldiers of the Volyn province at the beginning of the winter period of training and departure for various reasons. Classes were conducted irregularly. The excessive employment of the command staff is noted with "daily, hourly work in squadrons ... due to the unfavorable quartering of the regiment and the location of the stables at the beginning of the winter period", severe weather conditions - deep snow. The shortcomings in combat training mentioned in Zhukov's report were typical not only for the 7th Samara Cavalry Division, but also for the Red Army as a whole. In the report of the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs for 1923-1924

48 Ibid. S. 56.

49 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 153.

50 Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 57-59.

it was noted: "The large shortage of junior and middle command personnel, their unsatisfactory general training, and turnover did not allow them to properly deploy and deliver classes. Due to the lack of a cadre of military personnel, recruits were involved in carrying outfits, which was reflected in their training. Only special teams and schools of junior command personnel were fully staffed due to shortages in units,

especially in the infantry. The arrival of reinforcements at different times led to the formation in parts of heterogeneous training groups. A large percentage of the illiterate and semi-literate tore the Red Army from combat training for general education training. Shortcomings in the equipment of camps, training fields, training grounds, instruments and manuals also affected the assimilation of training programs by the troops. 51 And yet, even in such conditions, G.K. Zhukov, we must give him his due, managed to organize systematic studies and strengthen discipline. As a result, according to the results of the review of the units of the 2nd brigade, held on July 24, 1924 by the division command, thanks were announced to the brigade commander Selitsky, the commander of the 39th cavalry regiment Zhukov and the military commissar of this regiment Yanin.

In Minsk, difficult novels of Georgy Konstantinovich with Alexandra Zuykova and Maria Volokhova were developed. Trying to understand them is a thankless task, and not entirely noble. Therefore, we will refer to people related to Zhukov by family relations. "Mom began to follow her father everywhere," recalled the eldest daughter of Alexandra Dievna Era. - She shook for hours in collapsed carts, carts, lived in unheated huts. She sewed her tunics into skirts, Red Army calico shirts into underwear, weaved "sandals" from ropes ... Because of these migrations, she lost her first child, as they said - a boy. She was not advised to give birth anymore - fragile health. The youngest daughter of Zuykova Ella claims that for the first time her mother and Zhukov "signed in the 22nd year. But, apparently, over the years of endless moving, the documents were lost, and for the second time, father and mother registered already in the 53rd year in

Moscow registry office.

Zhukov's grandson Georgy, the son of Volokhova's daughter Margarita, according to the words of his grandparents, relates the renewal of the acquaintance of Georgy Konstantinovich and Maria Nikolaevna just in 1922: "Then Maria's parents died in Poltava, and she moved to Minsk to her older sister Polina, who by that time already became the wife of Anton Mitrofanovich Yanin. The houses of Zhukov and Yanin stood side by side, and the two friends, the commander and commissar of the regiment, were practically inseparable. And in the 26th year, Polina and Anton Mitrofanovich have a son, Vladimir. And Georgy Konstantinovich and Maria become godparents. Grandfather was delighted with the baby and kept saying that his biggest dream was to have a son... Grandfather always claimed that Alexandra Dievna was unable to have children. This ... also caused him to cool down towards her ... The bachelor grandfather practically lived with the Yanins, was in a civil marriage with Maria and repeatedly asked her to marry him. But Maria Nikolaevna was an active Komsomol member and considered registering a marriage a relic of the past. Yes, and by law

51 RGVA. F. 4. Op. 3. D. 2664. L. 79.

44th year, registration of marriages in the registry offices was not required. The daughter of Zhukov and Maria Volokhova, Margarita Georgievna, generally denies that in the first half of the 20s in Belarus, Zhukov maintained constant contact with Zuykova. "In Minsk, Georgy Konstantinovich lived without Alexandra Dievna," Margarita Georgievna noted. They never had anything in common. And all her visits to her father were unexpected for her father. He did not want to live with her, repeatedly repeated that he did not love. Alexandra Dievna, apparently, suffered - she tried to move into Zhukov's house, and when she succeeded, her father had no choice but to go to the Yanins and hide there. To get rid of Alexandra Dievna, who endured everything, her father many times bought her a train ticket home to the Voronezh province, boots and other gifts, personally put her on the train and asked her not to return. She dutifully left, but then wrote that she could not live without him, that she had already informed all her relatives that she had a husband, and returned to Minsk again. In July 1924, a new turn took place in the military career of G.K. Zhukov: G.D. Gai informed Georgy Konstantinovich about the decision to send him to study at the Higher Cavalry School. Before the competitive exams, which were successfully passed, I had to immerse myself in books. Before leaving for Leningrad, where the school was located (soon it was renamed the Cavalry Advanced Courses for Commanders - KKUKS), Zhukov signed the following order on October 1, 1924: to my assistant in the combat unit Comrade. Mikhailovsky.

Reason: Order of the division No. 365 of September 23. §

2. Comrade soldiers, commanders and political workers.

Leaving for the Higher Cavalry School to replenish their knowledge, which is required by the Red Army in connection with the evolution of military art, arising from the achievements of technology, I must say that every soldier, every commander and political worker in the years of peaceful study, in the years of free respite, must understand that the cadre The Red Army, at the moment of the decisive battle with international capital for its proletarian right, will have to play a decisive role in leading the armed working masses. The leading cadre of the Working People's Army, resolving its tasks on the battlefields, will be obliged to solve them with the least sacrifices, with the least expenditure of blood, because the labor forces, kindred to us by blood, cannot perish from ignorance of its leaders, and therefore, leaving to study, I full of hope that every commander and soldier who this year could not be sent to the widely scattered schools of the USSR will not lose a single extra minute for self-education and self-education, and the achievements that the 39th Buzuluk regiment has in raising its combat capability will certainly be consolidated and deepened.

Know, then, that the communist organization of the regiment, like a faithful sentinel at the proletarian post, will stand on the point of view of the real rightness of the cause begun by our leader Comrade. Lenin. And the fighters, under the leadership of the battle-tested Communist Party, will be able to prepare themselves for a decisive battle between two sworn enemies,

proletariat with capital. Long
live education! Long live
the fighters, commanders and political workers of the glorious 39th
Buzuluk Cavalry Regiment!"⁵²

The main attention in the courses was given to the tactical improvement of commanders, the development of new means of combat, the ability to organize battle and interact with artillery and tanks. The organization of the armies of potential opponents was also studied. Much attention was paid to the methodology for conducting fire training and mastery of weapons that were in service with the cavalry. According to a long tradition, riding and dressage training for a young horse was presented at a high level. The courses were, as it were, an equestrian laboratory, and after their completion, students usually became in parts the main initiators of the wide development of equestrian sports. At the same time, other commanders, who later became prominent military leaders, were trained at the courses, including the future Marshals of the Soviet Union A.I.

Eremenko, I.Kh. Bagramyan, K.K. Rokossovsky. Bagramyan recalled: "Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov was considered one of the most capable among the students of our group. Already then he was distinguished not only by pronounced volitional qualities, but also by a special originality of thinking. In the lessons on cavalry tactics, Zhukov surprised us more than once with some kind of surprise. His decisions always caused the most controversy, and he was usually able to defend his views with great logic.⁵³ Rokossovsky noted that "Zhukov, like no one else, devoted himself to the study of military science. Let's look into his room - everything is crawling on the map spread out on the floor. Even then, business and duty were above all for him."⁵⁴ Georgy Konstantinovich's indefatigable thirst for knowledge remained for the rest of his life. This can also be judged from the words of his daughter Ella Georgievna: "According to the stories of my mother and Era, and then, when I grew up, I was convinced of this myself, after the next move, we began to create each new family "nest" from books. Sometimes

the furniture had not yet been brought in ... as the father began to fill the apartment with books. He brought them in stacks. They could lie on window sills, chairs, on the dining table and even on the floor... He did not like to read in the study, but settled down at the table or in an armchair in the dining room. Very often he did not just read, but made notes in the margins with a sharply sharpened simple pencil.

Zhukov was actively involved in the work of the military scientific society at the courses. Each listener developed some topic, on which he made a report at a meeting of the society. Everyone remembered G.K. Zhukov's report "The main factors influencing the theory of military art". Having thoroughly studied the works of A.V. Suvorov, K. Clausewitz, A.A. Brusilov, other generals and military theorists, relying on the experience of the Civil War and on their own combat and

⁵² Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 63.

⁵³ Bagramyan I.X. Thus the war began. M., 2000. S. 14.

⁵⁴ Rokossovsky K.K. Soldier duty. M., 1968. S. 91–92.

team practice, he made a detailed, original and deeply reasoned report, which interested not only course participants, but also teachers. During their studies in the summer months,

students went out into the field, solved problems on cavalry tactics and riding techniques. The field studies were completed by a long trip around the Novgorod region. In its finale, a horse race was arranged from Novgorod to Leningrad. The two-hundred-kilometer path was overcome in a day. A large war game was held just before the release. In the course of her performance of one of the highest positions was entrusted to Georgy Konstantinovich. As always, Zhukov had no lack of character and dedication. What is at least such a fact worth. When the studies were completed in August 1925, at the

request of Zhukov, the command allowed him, M.I. Saveliev and N. Rybalkin (and not P.S. Rybalko, as B. Sokolov writes in the book "Unknown Zhukov: a portrait without retouching in the mirror epoch". P. 66. - V.D.) return from Leningrad to Minsk - to his 7th Samara Cavalry Division - by running on horseback. "Having set off on the road," recalled Georgy Konstantinovich, "we decided to walk in a variable gait, that is, a step - a trot, and occasionally use a gallop. On the first day, we walked 10 kilometers less than planned, as it was felt that the horses were tired,

and besides, my horse, a thoroughbred mare Dira, was lame: she was already 12 years old, and for a horse this is an advanced age. We were tired and wanted to rest. The peasants greeted us cordially: they fed us properly, fed the horses. The morning started badly for me - the horse was still limping. After filling the puncture with wax and bandaging my hoof, I decided to lead Dira on the reins. Fortunately, the horse soon stopped limping. Sat on top. No, nothing -

not lame. Trotted - good. To reduce the load on the right sore leg, I decided to go further only at a step and a gallop from my left leg.

It was much easier for my comrades to walk on healthy horses, I dismounted more often, led the horse by the reins, and, of course, I myself became more physically tired. But friends at the stops took care of finding food and caring for the horses."⁵⁵ It took three brave cavalymen seven

days to cover about a thousand miles from Leningrad to Minsk. In the capital of Belarus, they were solemnly greeted by fellow soldiers and local residents. It was a rare run in terms of range and complexity in the history of cavalry, and Zhukov often and with pleasure recalled this episode. Here is what was said about this in the order for the 7th Samara Cavalry Division dated September 23, 1925:

"§ 1. At the end of August, three commanders of the division entrusted to me - the commander of the 39th comrade Zhukov, the commander of the 42nd comrade Savelyev and the commander No. 1 of the 37th cavalry regiment comrade Rybalkin made a run Leningrad - Minsk, which set a high standard - 139 versts per day, with a total distance

of 973 versts. I consider it my duty to note the high sporting achievement of this

⁵⁵ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 141-142.

run.

Mobility - the main property of the cavalry - depends primarily on the ability to use the strength of one's horse, and in this respect, long runs are the best preparation. The Council of People's Commissars of the BSSR

noted the work of Comrades. Zhukov, Saveliev and Rybalkin with a monetary award. For my part, I

bring gratitude to these comrades on behalf of the service ... "56 In the spring of 1925, in accordance

with the decision of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) of June 28, 1924, the introduction of unity of command began in the Western Military District. Those commanders of corps, divisions and regiments who, having good military training, were communists and were able to lead the party's educational work, were appointed full one-man commanders. After graduating, G.K. Zhukov became the first such one-man commander in the 7th Samara Cavalry Division. Using the new knowledge gained, he conducts many demonstrative and instructive-methodical classes to train soldiers and commanders of his regiment in reconnaissance, organization of combat, and interaction with technical means of combat. Much attention was paid to the sports and physical training of personnel. The regiment in all types of equestrian sports became the main competitor to the best

cavalry units of the district, and the regiment commander himself was appointed chairman of the equestrian sports committee of the 7th Samara Cavalry Division.

Era Georgievna also mentions her father's commitment to sports: "... In the garrison life, equestrian competitions occupied a special place. They were held, as far as I remember, quite regularly after the completion of field exercises or on the occasion of holidays. It was very solemn, with a large crowd of people. Dad always participated in them and often took prizes. It was especially interesting to watch how the horsemen at full gallop cut down a vine and some balls, it seems, straw, suspended on wooden stands. I remember that in our eternal journeys, my father's prizes were especially carefully packed and transported from place to place. My father always took me and my mother to these competitions to "cheer" for him. There was a case when I was even allowed to go when I was sick ... My father paid great attention to physical training and the development of sports among military personnel in the future, considering them one of the main conditions for the combat readiness of the army. At home he did gymnastics, wiped himself with cold water, rode as regularly as possible, while maintaining an excellent cavalry bearing for many years. When over the years, due to a more immobile lifestyle, my father began to gain weight, he was much upset by this and tried with all his might to fight this, as he believed, misfortune ... "Zhukov's activity in promoting physical education and direct participation in all sports events was repeatedly noted by the command. So, in the order for the division dated March 6, 1926, it was said: "The regimental equestrian

competitions of the 37th and 39th cavalry regiments held today showed great achievements in drill training. It can be seen that the political composition with special interest and

love for the training of young Red Army soldiers. For which I express gratitude to the commander of the 37th cavalry regiment, comrade Mogilevchik and the commander of the 39th cavalry regiment, comrade Zhukov, and to the entire political staff of the aforementioned regiments on behalf of the service.

Despite being very busy, G.K. Zhukov found time for teaching at the Belarusian State University, to which he was invited by the rector of the university, Professor V.I. Picheta. Here Georgy Konstantinovich taught a course of military pre-conscription training.

In the autumn of 1927, the Red Army cavalry inspector S.M. Budyonny visited the 39th Buzuluk Cavalry Regiment. First, he examined the dining room and the kitchen, talked with the Red Army soldiers and cooks, inquired about the quality of the products, their processing, and took a sample. I checked the course of combat training, after which squadrons were built, a brood of horses began. The equestrian composition of the regiment was in good condition, excellent forging. Zhukov received praise.

The commander of the troops of the Belarusian military district A. I. Yegorov also came to the Zhukov regiment. He attended tactical exercises on the topic "Hidden exit of the cavalry regiment to the flank and rear of the enemy and the swift attack of the enemy." When summarizing the results, Zhukov especially remembered "his instruction that it is necessary to learn to understand operational art, given that the war, if it is unleashed by the enemies of our Motherland, will certainly require knowledge from many of us in the field of operational art."

High commanding qualities, hard and painstaking work of G.K. Zhukov to improve his education, concern for the combat and political training of the regiment did not go unnoticed. "An energetic and decisive commander," said the certification for 1928, signed by the commander and commissar of the 7th Samara Cavalry Division D. Serdich. - Thanks to the work of Comrade. Zhukov, aimed at education and combat training, the regiment stood up to its due height in all respects ... As a regiment commander and one-man commander, he was perfectly prepared. To be nominated for the position of a brigade commander (brigade commander — V.D.) on an extraordinary basis." 57 will come to Minsk to give birth. According to grandson Georgy, having learned about Zuykova's pregnancy, his grandfather "was in despair because he was afraid

of losing Maria Nikolaevna, for whom he had a serious feeling." According to her father, mother and her stepfather A.M. Yanin, Margarita Zhukova describes further events as follows: "When Alexandra Dievna brought a sickly girl from the hospital, whom she named Era, she told Georgy Konstantinovich that she would never leave him again. In response, the father left his own house and settled with the Yanins. But Alexandra Dievna continued to demand that he live with her. And six months after the birth of Era in June 29, Maria Nikolaevna gave birth to Zhukov me. Dad later told me that I was so pink, blue-eyed, just

57 Op. Quoted from: Svetyaishin N. From Soldier to Marshal. (To the 70th anniversary of G.K. Zhukov.)//Military historical magazine. 1966. No. 11. S. 32.

a real daisy that he called me - Margarita. A month later, on July 6, my father registered me in the registry office as his daughter and issued a birth certificate. So I got the surname Zhukova and patronymic Georgievna. Margarita's son George adds: "Of course, this (that is, Zhukov's recognition of Margarita as his daughter. - V.D.) caused a storm of protest from Alexandra Dievna, who then ran after Maria Nikolaevna, threatening to pour sulfuric acid into her eyes, then asked to give her Margarita. She also demanded that Georgy Konstantinovich return home and help with Era, who was ill all the time. Grandfather refused, said that this was not his daughter, and continued to live with the Yanins. It is difficult to say how much one can trust such memories, in which personal grievances are visible. It is hardly fair to say that Georgy Konstantinovich did not consider Era his daughter. Indeed, in his letter to Alexandra Dievna on May 21, 1929, there are such words:

"You write that I write more and inquire about my daughter! Isn't that enough for you? Besides, how can you separate yourself from your daughter... Kiss your daughter." Zhukov's grandson further says: "Having realized that her husband could not be returned with kindness, Alexandra Dievna wrote a statement to the party organization against Georgy Konstantinovich. She asked him to reason and force him to sign with her. Grandfather did not want to live with Alexandra Dievna, no matter how they forced him, and openly declared this when analyzing his personal file. The party organization fined him for

bigamy and set a condition: if he did not return to the applicant who gave birth first, he would be expelled from the party. Maria Nikolaevna was simply shocked and, in order to save the reputation of her beloved, advised him to return to Alexandra Dievna. She said that she was leaving him herself, although this decision was painful for her. Later, Georgy Konstantinovich confesses to his mother that this was the only time in his life when the woman he loved left him.

Margarita Georgievna clarifies: "This personal matter of my father lasted more than half a year. In the midst of events, Polina dies of typhus. Three-year-old Volodya (son of Yanin. -V.D.) remains without a mother. Yanin, who has become a widower, offers to take Maria Nikolaevna with her infant daughter to Minvody, where his father and brothers live. She agrees, and Yanin draws up an official transfer. But before leaving, he talks like a man to Zhukov: "You are confused. Forget about Mary and daughter, I'll take care of them myself." Then he and Maria nobly took the children and left - first to Minvody, then to Kurgan and Krasnodar. And in 1941, Colonel Yanin, having a reservation from being drafted into the army, volunteers to go to the front. A year later, he will die near Stalingrad. The 17-year-old son of Anton Mitrofanovich Volodya, having added a year to himself, also goes to fight. A few months after the Kerch landing, he dies of wounds in

hospital."

Without referring to these events in his memoirs, G.K. Zhukov nevertheless said a few warm words about his friend: "I would especially like to note our commissioner Anton Mitrofanovich Yanin. He was a solid Bolshevik and a wonderful person who knew the soul of a soldier, who understood well how to approach someone, from whom to demand something. He was loved and respected by commanders, political workers and Red Army soldiers. It is a pity that this outstanding commissar did not live to this day - he died a death

brave in 1942 in a fight with the Nazis on the Caucasian front. He died along with his son, whom he raised as a courageous defender of the Motherland.⁵⁸ Era Georgievna, whose birth was one of

the reasons for the emergence of her father's party business, according to her parents, gives a different version of what happened: "In the 28th year, in Minsk ... mother ... in position and felt very unwell. People often came to her to help with something, and even just to visit friends, including this woman (Maria Volokhova. - V.D.). She deliberately appeared alone so that her father would later see her off. As a result, in the 29th year, Margarita was born. Everyone immediately understood who it was from - a small society, everyone in front of each other. My father then had big troubles along the party line. Apparently she complained. There was even some kind of court about alimony. Judging by the letters, my father did not want to pay them, and my mother forced him. But this hobby was momentary, and mom forgave him to dad.

At that time, Zhukov did not register a marriage with either Maria or Alexandra. Already during the Great Patriotic War, when correspondence between Maria Nikolaevna and Georgy Konstantinovich resumed, Zhukov reported that he was still not married. In 1929, Zhukov, in the end, really received a reprimand on the party line - for drunkenness and promiscuity in relations with women. God knows what really happened there, but everyone who knew Georgy Konstantinovich mentions that he was committed to a sober image

life.

... G.K. Zhukov was in the position of regiment commander for almost seven years. From the point of view of a military career, he "stayed too long", but gained rich team experience. He himself believed that "the regiment is the main combat unit" and without mastering the art of commanding the regiment it is impossible to become a qualified commander. As it turned out, S.M. Budyonny remembered well the commander of the 39th Buzuluk Cavalry Regiment, and on his recommendation, in November 1929, Zhukov was sent to Moscow for advanced training courses for the senior commanding staff of the Red Army, who worked at the Military Academy named after M.V. Frunze. The head of the group gave him the following description: satisfactory even for the day of a combined arms infantry commander. He did not lag behind the successes of other listeners of the group. He showed satisfactory knowledge of PU-29 (Field Charter of the Red Army of "Combined arms tactics knows quite 1929. - V.D.), as well as the combat charter of artillery. In operational tactical decisions, I found sufficient clarity and great (underlined in the document. - V.D.) firmness. He knows staff work almost satisfactorily. I do not presume to determine his knowledge as a cavalry commander. He was distinguished by great accuracy (even graphical) in his work. The method of war games and group exercises comprehended quite satisfactorily. He can successfully lead the general tactical training of the regiment and division. In terms of inclinations and character, the commander is clearly a combatant (he is not very suitable for staff work)."⁵⁹

After completing the courses at the end of March 1930, G.K. Zhukov returned

⁵⁸ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 129.

⁵⁹ Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 72.

in his native cavalry regiment, but soon by order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR on April 20, 1930, he was appointed commander of the 2nd brigade of the 7th Samara cavalry division, commanded by his classmate on courses in Leningrad K.K. Rokossovsky. The brigade consisted of two regiments: the 39th and 40th. After many years, Georgy Konstantinovich recalled:

“Perhaps, as a result of many years of habit with the 39th cavalry regiment, with whose people I became related, it seemed to me that the 39th regiment was better prepared in combat terms and more organized. However, I understood that the commanders and political workers of the 40th Cavalry Regiment, who also cherish the honor of their regiment, might react painfully if I set up the 39th Regiment as a model to follow.

Therefore, all the good things that the 40th Cavalry Regiment had, even the little things, I tried to celebrate, to set as an example to other units. We often arranged various demonstration exercises for both regiments in tactical, firearms, equestrian training, as well as on issues of political training and educational work. And this method very soon gave positive results. The 2nd brigade became the leader in the 7th Samara cavalry division, which was noted more than once, and this made us all happy.”⁶⁰ I would like to dwell separately on Zhukov's attestation, signed by K.K. Rokossovsky on November 8, 1930: “Strong will. Decisive. He

has a rich initiative and skillfully applies it in practice. Disciplined. Demanding and persistent in his demands. By nature, a little dry and not sensitive enough. Has a significant amount of stubbornness. Painfully selfish. Well prepared militarily. He has extensive practical team experience. He loves military affairs and is constantly improving. There is a clear potential for further growth. Authoritative. During the summer period, with the skillful leadership of the combat training of the brigade, he achieved major achievements in the field of combat and tactical shooting, as well as the growth of the brigade as a whole in tactical and combat terms. He is interested in mobilization work and knows it. He paid due attention to the conservation of weapons and horse stock, having achieved positive results. Politically prepared well. The position is quite appropriate. It can be used to the benefit of the case as a division commander or commander of a mechanized unit, subject to passing through the appropriate courses. He cannot be appointed to staff and teaching work - he organically hates it. ⁶¹ We must pay tribute to Rokossovsky - he managed to subtly notice the main character traits and draw an impressive portrait of the future commander with a few strokes. It is obvious that by this time, along with the best, fundamental qualities that allowed Georgy Konstantinovich to subsequently become not only an outstanding military leader, but also to gain truly nationwide appreciation, more and more pain points characteristic of him were revealed. Moreover, dryness and lack of sensitivity, stubbornness,

⁶⁰ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 153.

⁶¹ Op. Quoted from: Military Historical Journal. 1990. No. 5. S. 22.

heightened self-esteem later manifested itself more than once in Zhukov's activities. Despite the fact that Zhukov "organically" hated staff work, he had to go through it too. In February 1931, he was appointed assistant inspector of the Red Army cavalry. K.K. Rokossovsky, who commanded the 7th Samara Cavalry Division, arranged a solemn farewell to Zhukov. "A few days later, a dinner was held for the entire command and political staff of the 39th and 40th cavalry regiments, which was attended by the division command," recalled Georgy Konstantinovich. - I heard a lot of good, warm words addressed to me. They went from a pure heart and were remembered for a lifetime."⁶²

Together with A.D. Zuykova and the two-year-old Era, Zhukov moved to Moscow, where he settled in Sokolniki on Matrosskaya Tishina Street. To recreate the conditions of that life, we will use the memoirs of Marshal of the Soviet Union A.M. Vasilevsky, who almost simultaneously with Georgy Konstantinovich was appointed to the Combat Training Directorate of the Red Army and also lived in Sokolniki. "I went to Sokolniki, found this house - new houses with cramped apartments," writes Alexander Mikhailovich, "I found my apartment number - an apartment of several rooms, I was assigned one, and there are four of us: me, wife, mother-in-law, son (Yuri, future first husband of Era Zhukova. - V.D.). This is how I had to live after the conditions in which I was as a regiment commander. Zhukov had the same situation when he was also appointed there, to this Office ... "The future daughter-in-law of Vasilevsky, Era Zhukova, described the then life as follows:" In Moscow, we settled in Sokolniki on 11th Sokolnicheskaya Street, in a house where many military families. They lived in a communal apartment, occupying two small rooms, furnished, as was then customary among the majority of military personnel who roamed from place to place, with the simplest official furniture. Mom loved to tell how, having received another salary, dad somehow went to the center to buy a bookcase for books, and, according to mom, there were already a lot of them in those years. Having bought this very whatnot - I also remember it very well for some reason - dad carried it in his arms all the way. I don't think it ever crossed his mind to take the car. Indeed, in those years it was possible to get to Sokolniki only by tram. And what about a tram with a bookcase? By the way, at that time, the future marshal, A.M. Vasilevsky, was with dad, who went home on this tram. Nevertheless, this purchase brought dad a lot of joy - it was possible to arrange all the necessary

books."

In the Cavalry Inspectorate, Zhukov quickly showed his best side. S.M. Budyonny in his book "The Path Traveled" noted: "G.K. Zhukov quickly got up to speed. And it is no coincidence that at the general meeting of communists of all inspections and the combat training department of the people's commissariat for military and naval affairs, we unanimously elected Zhukov as secretary of the party bureau ... Zhukov very soon gained authority among the command staff. What I liked about Georgy Konstantinovich was that he deeply delved into the issues of combat training of cavalry units, showed initiative, devoted himself to the cause of strengthening the power of the Red Army.

62 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 169.

Army." In

more detail, Zhukov's activities in the new position are reflected in the characteristic signed by Budyonny on October 31, 1931. It notes that G.K. Zhukov took an active part in the development of instructions for the preparation of cavalry for the summer period, he also drew up an approximate plan for the combat training of a cavalry regiment, recommended by the combat training headquarters for all parts of the Red Army as exemplary. He developed and organized exercises at the training camps of the highest commanding staff of the cavalry of the Red Army, successfully led the All-Union competitions of cavalry platoons in pentathlon. He did a great job of compiling a manual for the training of fighters and small units of the cavalry of the Red Army and is completing the development of a manual for the training of regimental schools and junior commanding officers of the cavalry, and for the development of these guidelines, he carried out serious preparatory work with the commanding staff of combat units in the 1st Cavalry Division (Medzhybizh camp). In addition, he participated in the maneuvers of the UVO (Ukrainian Military District. - V.D.) as a regimental mediator. "All of the above works," is indicated in the description, "are performed by Comrade. Zhukov G.K. in shock order, successfully and on time."

The main conclusions of this characterization are devoted to Zhukov's personal qualities. In particular, it is noted that he is "a commander with strong willed qualities, very demanding of himself and his subordinates, in the latter case, excessive rigidity and rudeness are observed"; "tactically and operationally competent combined arms commander"; "having no academic education, he works hard on his personal military and political development"; "the sense of responsibility for the assigned work is developed to a high degree (example: the development of the above-mentioned combat training manuals not only formally, but with a constant search, refinement of new, better forms and methods, great initiative, etc.)." The general conclusion completes the characterization: "Comrade. G.K. Zhukov - trained general commander-one-man; fully corresponds to the position held and the position of the commander of a cavalry division and the head of a normal cavalry school.⁶³ The attestation describes in sufficient detail everything that Zhukov had to do. Naturally, by the nature of his work, he had the opportunity to contact or meet with

many famous military figures and theorists of that time. Georgy Konstantinovich's judgments about these people make it possible to better imagine the state of affairs in the Red Army in the first half of the 1930s.

"The team of the Artillery Inspectorate, headed by Artillery Inspector N.M. Rogovsky, carried out a huge amount of work. He knew artillery well and enjoyed great prestige among the troops. The commanders of the troops of the districts, the commanders of the formations, the engineers of the artillery service reckoned with N.M. Rogovsky, listened to his opinion."⁶⁴

⁶³ Op. Quoted from: Military Historical Journal. 1990. No. 5. S. 22–23

⁶⁴ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 177.

About the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs K.E. Voroshilov in his memoirs Zhukov says: "I must say that Kliment Efremovich enjoyed authority among the command and political staff of the army and navy, as one of the the closest associates of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the oldest active workers of our Bolsheviks from who served prison terms once active, of course, was weak, but, he, no practical military art party, the Not behind struggle as a connoisseur of military affairs, the civil war, since, in addition to the base of the field of military science, he V participation of the theoretical He And had, therefore, this weaponry, to rely V on figures such as M.N. Tukhachevsky, And Not V.K. Triandafillov, I.E. V leadership of the People's Commissariat of Defense, V the construction was first of all Yakir, P. connoisseurs of V military sciences He his closest assistants, such large military military affairs " on men A.I. Egorov, S.S. Kamenev, Uborevich, other major

AND.

And

.65

The following lines are also dedicated to M.N. Tukhachevsky in Zhukov's memoirs: "Now, as First Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Mikhail Nikolayevich Tukhachevsky did a lot of organizational, creative and scientific work, and we all felt

that the main leadership role in People's Commissariat of Defense plays He . When I met him, I was captivated by his versatile knowledge of military science. An intelligent, broadly educated professional soldier, he had an excellent grasp of both tactics and strategic matters. M.N. Tukhachevsky well understood the role of various types of our armed forces in modern wars and was able to creatively approach any problem.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, all of the talented military leaders listed did not live to see the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. Tukhachevsky, Yegorov, Yakir and Uborevich were convicted and shot on false charges; Kamenev died during the exercises, for which, despite his illness, Commissar Voroshilov forced him to go; Triandafillov died in 1931 in a plane crash.

In the spring of 1933, G.K. Zhukov returned to Belarus again. By order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR on March 25, he was appointed commander and military commissar of the 4th Cavalry Leningrad Red Banner Division named after K.E. Voroshilov, which was located in the city of Slutsk. Previously, this division was considered the best in the 1st Cavalry Army. But then she was transferred to the Leningrad Military District, from there in 1932 - to Belarus, to places where everything had to be built anew. For this, the personnel of the division was used, as a result, combat training was launched, and the commander of the division, G.P. Kletkin, was found guilty. I.P. Uborevich, who at that time commanded the Belarusian military district, asked K.E. Voroshilov to appoint G.K. Zhukov to the post of division commander. S. M. Budyonny admonished Zhukov, admonished with excitement: "The 4th division has always been the best in the ranks of the cavalry, and it should be the best!"⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Ibid. S. 180.

⁶⁶ Ibid. pp. 180–181.

⁶⁷ Ibid. S. 185.

In Slutsk, the Zhukov family lived on the territory of a military camp in a small wooden house with no special amenities, half of which was occupied by the family of the deputy division commander. But soon the construction of brick houses began, and the Zhukov family moved to one of them. In this house, Zhukov's second daughter, Ella, was born. From the memoirs of Era Georgievna: "... I remember with what impatience and excitement my dad and I were waiting for her birth, how we stood under the windows of a two-story wooden maternity hospital and tried to make out someone in a white bundle, which my mother showed us from the window. After the birth of Ella, my mother was seriously ill and spent a long time in the hospital. Concerns about a small baby and about me fell on dad, who, however, was actively helped by my mother's friends ... "

The new house was surrounded by a garden with tall grass and fruit trees. Here Georgy Konstantinovich, who became interested in photography in those years, took many pictures of his family, developed them himself, printed them at night and was very proud of it. Upon arrival in

Slutsk, Zhukov immediately went to the division headquarters. Its commander, G.P. Kletkin, was not at the headquarters: he said that he was unwell. The deputy commander for political affairs, Nikolai Albertovich Jung, and the chief of staff of the division, Alexander Ivanovich Vertogradsky, briefed the new commander on the state of affairs in parts of the division. "I was grateful to them for the fact that they were able to quickly and thoroughly state everything," recalled Georgy Konstantinovich. "However, I had the main thing to do: to thoroughly understand the situation directly in the units and subunits, identify shortcomings, find their causes, and , together with commanders and political workers, outline ways to eliminate them." throughout his military career. In a short time, he got acquainted with all the regiments and divisions of the division. Mostly experienced people commanded them, and

subsequently Zhukov relied on them in his work. So, the commander of the 19th Manych cavalry regiment was F.Ya.Kostenko. The 21st cavalry regiment was headed by I.N. Muzychenko, whom Zhukov knew from the 14th separate cavalry brigade. The 23rd cavalry regiment was commanded by L.N. Sakovich, and the 4th mechanized regiment was commanded by V.V. Novikov. The 20th Cavalry Regiment, stationed in the village of Konyuhi, 20 kilometers from the city of Slutsk, found itself in the most difficult situation. The regiment was commanded by V.V. Kryukov, with whom Zhukov would be bound by a long-term friendship.

The commander of the Belarusian military district, I.P. Uborevich, was a demanding man. And this at first was fully experienced by Georgy Konstantinovich. Six months after taking office, he received a reprimand from the commander of the district troops for the shortcomings in the preparation of the division discovered during the inspection. G.K. Zhukov considered the punishment unfair, at least premature, flared up and gave a telegram: "To the commander of the district troops, Uborevich. You are an extremely unfair commander of the troops of the district, I do not want to serve with you and ask you to second me to any other district.

Zhukov".

Two days later, Uborevich called the division headquarters and asked Zhukov not to get excited, but to be patient for two weeks until the next inspection. During this check, the commander of the district met with Zhukov and informed him that he personally checked the materials on which the divisional commander was reprimanded. He came to the conclusion that the punishment was unfair, he proposes to consider the issue settled. "I felt that he was working on me," Zhukov later told the writer Simonov. - He looked at me, gave me various tasks, pulled me out for reports. Then he instructed me at a meeting at the district headquarters to make a report on the actions of the French cavalry during the battle on the Po River in the First World War. This report was unusual and difficult for me. Moreover, I, the division commander, had to make this report in the presence of all the commanders of the military branches of the district and all the corps commanders. But I prepared for the report and was confused only at the first moment: I hung up all the cards, stopped near them; I have to start, but I stand and keep silent. But Uborevich managed to help me at that moment, he called me to a conversation with his question, then everything went fine, and later he rated this report as good. I repeat, I felt him patiently working on me."⁶⁹

Leading the division out of the breakthrough, Zhukov focused his main efforts on raising the level of training of middle and senior commanders in tactical exercises and exercises. At the same time, he proceeded from the fact that commanders should in practice master the skills of modern combat and command and control, and train personnel in conditions close to combat. Therefore, most of the time the division was in the field. Particular attention was paid to actions in a meeting battle. This required the abandonment of the usual methods of control using written orders, telephones, and everything related to the laying of communication lines. Already at that time, Zhukov believed that it was necessary to resolutely switch to radio control, to a system of short combat orders - "control from the saddle", as horsemen liked to say then.

"... He himself, as a division commander, worked very hard," recalled the former chief of staff of the 4th cavalry division, General L.F. Minyuk. - I didn't hold a single event with kondachka, I always thought everything through. Being an energetic, organized and highly disciplined man, Zhukov could not stand lazy, clumsy, thoughtless and windbags. In a completely different way, he treated those who worked at full strength, creatively and with a twinkle. I carefully looked at the style of work and the character of the division commander, and this is quite understandable, otherwise the headquarters as a command and control body would not be able to fulfill its role. It was immediately clear that strict order was established in the division. The work plans of the division headquarters, combat training of units, party political work, as well as mass sports events, approved by the command, were carried out accurately and on time. The commander himself worked strictly according to plan. Classes with command personnel, staff and military exercises in the field were carefully prepared, conducted against an interesting and sharp operational-tactical background, and were always

⁶⁹ Simonov K.M. Notes on the biography of G.K. Zhukov // Military History Journal. 1987. No. 11. S. 43.

purposeful." Zhukov not

only examined in detail the developments for training with command personnel and with parts of the division in the field, but very meticulously he analyzed the entire course of the upcoming exercises, was interested in the details of the dynamics of the actions of the conditional "enemy" and carefully analyzed and discussed possible options for decisions of the commanders during the exercises. Often disputes arose between the commander and the chief of staff of the division on operational and tactical issues. Zhukov in these disputes always demanded substantiated evidence, but, as a rule, disputes ended with the decision of the division commander, and after that a lesson or exercise was conducted with the troops.

Georgy Konstantinovich prepared thoroughly for classes: he got acquainted with both historical materials and novelties. Possessing an excellent memory, he never used his notes when explaining the material, but used only a working map. His analyzes were especially interesting - Zhukov did not just consider the decisions of the commanders and their mistakes, but skillfully looked into the future and could vividly draw a picture of the battle and its consequences. L.F. Minyuk noted another important feature in the training of command personnel: "...

Keeping in mind that the division was stationed in the border zone and, together with the border detachment, had to repel the first blow of the enemy in case of war, G.K. Zhukov ... kept close contact with border guards. Looking for the most profitable and effective tactics of the division, he periodically went to the border detachment to clarify and improve the plan of interaction between the division's units and the outposts of the border detachment. In the spring of 1936, Zhukov introduced me to the commanders of the border guards, showed me a section of the border that was part of the zone of possible actions of the division in the event of war, and played with me several options for decisions on the deployment of the division and the dynamics of actions ... "

Often, when he was least expected, I.P. Uborevich came to the division, and each of his visits usually began with the rise of units on combat alert, and ended with tactical exercises or command training. Uborevich also visited the 4th Cavalry Division in 1934. After listening to Zhukov's report, the commander gave him four hours to bring the 21st Cavalry Regiment under the command of Muzychenko into the field. The exercises lasted five hours. During this time, the commander of the district, accompanied by Zhukov, managed to go around all the units of the regiment, which acted as the vanguard of the division. He rode more than 80 kilometers and only after that he gave up the exercises. After the analysis, which Zhukov did right from the saddle in front of the regiment, Uborevich thanked everyone for the teaching and promised to be present at the upcoming maneuvers. Uborevich kept this word and came to one of the pre-maneuver exercises, which was held on the topic: "Encounter battle of a rifle division with a cavalry division." The division made a

good impression on him. The last time Uborevich checked Zhukov's division was in 1936 and again found it in excellent condition. Discipline, general organization, constant combat readiness were rated only as "good" and "excellent". Always stingy with praise, Uborevich warmly thanked the personnel and awarded many with valuable gifts.

This visit of the commander was also remembered by Era Georgievna: "I also remember the stay in 1936 of I.P. The leading commanders and their wives were present. I clearly remember a large table, apparently made up of several, since we didn't have a large table at that time, at the head of which were I.P. Uborevich and dad. I think they had fun. My father greatly appreciated and respected this man..." Another qualitative stage in the combat training of the troops of the district predetermined the emergence of new means of warfare. "Give me a tank!", "Give me a plane!", "Give me an engine!", "Let's master the powerful new equipment

that the people give to the Red Army!" - these slogans literally lived the commanders and fighters of the district, carried away by a common patriotic impulse, a common desire to rise to the heights of technological progress. In the order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR of December 1, 1933 "On the results of the combat training of the Red Army for 1933 and tasks for 1934", the main goal of training troops for the new academic year was determined: "Mastering the mobile forms of operation and combat of rifle (cavalry) formations in combination with deep, reliably secured by maneuver behind enemy lines of motorized troops and aviation. In classes and exercises with the highest and senior commanding staff, headquarters, rear services and troops, it was required to work out: "1. A deep offensive battle of a rifle (cavalry) corps, reinforced with motorized mechanized troops and combat aircraft, against a fortified or temporarily stopped enemy with the simultaneous defeat of the battle formation of his defense to the full depth. 2. A meeting engagement of rifle (cavalry) formations reinforced with motorized mechanized

troops and combat aviation based on the rapid and decisive actions of strong vanguards and the simultaneous strike across the entire depth of the enemy force grouping.

3. Defensive combat by infantry (cavalry) formations with the assistance of tanks and combat aircraft and with the full use of engineering and chemical barriers against massive enemy tank and air attacks. 4. Independent operations in the operational rear of the enemy by motorized

formations together with combat aviation and in cooperation with cavalry (rifle) formations."70

"The substantiation of the theory of a deep offensive operation was a serious achievement of our military art," Zhukov noted. - In general, the operation was characterized by the massive use of tanks, aviation, artillery and airborne assault forces, as it was designed for the conduct of hostilities by modern, technically equipped armies. The essence of the deep operation was as follows. The first task is to break open the enemy front with a simultaneous strike to its entire tactical depth, the second is to immediately bring mechanized troops into the breakthrough, which, in cooperation with aviation, must advance to the entire depth of the enemy's operational defense until the entire enemy grouping is destroyed.

At the same time, it was taken into account that, in general, the war would be waged by armies of many millions over vast areas, and the success of a deep operation would ensure the defeat of the entire depth of the enemy's defense by aviation and artillery, plus decisive actions on the flanks and in the rear of enemy groupings with the aim of encircling and destroying them.”⁷¹

The spirit of the new requirements was imbued with all the tactical training sessions held in units and subunits of the 4th Cavalry Division, its exercises and maneuvers. Here is how G.K. Zhukov described such exercises: “The regiment being trained was on alert, and the area where it was necessary to concentrate was indicated to it. In this area, the command was given a tactical situation and a combat order requiring a march maneuver through difficult, swampy or forested areas. The route was chosen such that it required a lot of work on clearing and laying roads, building gates and crossings from improvised material. At the same time, no engineering means of reinforcement were usually given in order to teach the command of all levels to find a way out of a difficult situation on their own and with local means. Such exercises were physically extremely difficult. Sometimes people literally fell off their feet, often without sleep and normal nutrition for several days in a row. But what joy seized the fighters and commanders

when part of them, having completed the most difficult task, achieved their goal! .. The command, headquarters and all personnel acquired practical skills to get out of any difficult situation with honor.

In August-September 1934, under the leadership of the commander of the Belarusian Military District, I.P. The People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR K.E. Voroshilov was present at the exercises. The division commanded by Zhukov acted on the side of the Blues. According to Voroshilov, the exercise went satisfactorily, and the tactical training of the troops was good. However, the troops and staffs failed to master "the art of organizing and conducting reconnaissance" by the beginning of the exercise. The People's Commissar of Defense, in his order No. 0019 dated September 16, 1934, demanded before the end of the academic year: “Work out the issues of management, organization of communications, interaction in mobile types of combat (oncoming collision, encirclement, exit from encirclement, complex regroupings, military operations with a sharp change in the situation). Classes should cover the issues of combined arms combat with the participation of military branches, perhaps more often train staffs with limited means of communication.”⁷³

The requirements set out in the order of the People's Commissar of Defense show that in the first half of the 1930s, serious attention was paid to working out issues related to the initial period of the war. This was exactly what the troops needed in the event of a war. This was exactly what they lacked so much at the moment when the Nazi

⁷¹ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 183–184.

⁷² Ibid. S. 198.

⁷³ RGVA. F. 4. Op. 15. D. 11. L. 105.

Germany attacked the Soviet Union. In 1935, G.K. Zhukov was awarded the newly introduced title of "brigade commander". In the same year, units of the 4th Cavalry Division received high marks according to the results of the inspection, including the most difficult type of cavalry combat training - fire. The division was awarded the Order of Lenin.

"All this excited me to the core," Zhukov recalled. - I thought hard about what we should do in order to raise the combat training and the general condition of the division even higher ... To present the Order of Lenin, the division was assembled on horseback on one of the parade grounds of the city. All personnel were in high spirits, banners fluttered on the flanks of each unit, under which the veterans of the division went into battle with the White Guards and White Poles. In solemn silence, after the oncoming march and report, S.M. Budyonny went up to the podium. At his signal, I drive up with assistants, holding the battle flag of the division. S.M. Budyonny attaches the Order of Lenin to him, and we, with the banner, gallop in front of the formation."⁷⁴ By the Decree of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR of August 16, 1936, a number of commanders and Red Army soldiers were awarded orders

and medals. Among those awarded was G.K. Zhukov, who received the Order of Lenin.

In the spring of 1936, the formation of Cossack troops began in the Red Army. In this regard, a number of organizational measures were carried out, including the renaming of cavalry formations into Cossack ones. The 4th Cavalry Division became known as the 4th Don Cossack Red Banner Division named after K.E. Voroshilov. A new form of clothing for the Cossacks was also introduced, which, following the traditions and emphasizing the national character of the Cossacks, provided for the wearing of Circassian, cloak, beshmet, hood, stripes on trousers. The 4th Don Cossack Division distinguished itself in September 1936 at the

maneuvers of the troops of the Belarusian Military District, led by the commander of the first rank I.P. Uborevich. The maneuvers were attended by People's Commissar of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union K.E. Voroshilov, his first deputy Marshal of the Soviet Union M.N. Tukhachevsky, Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army Marshal of the Soviet Union A.I. Egorov, members of the government of Belarus, military delegations of England, France and Czechoslovakia.

The maneuvers were carried out with the aim of practical testing of new views on the preparation and conduct of an operation (combat), the quality of weapons and military equipment, and the degree of training of troops. They practiced such issues as a counter battle against the backdrop of an army operation, an attack and a breakthrough of a defensive zone with the subsequent introduction of a success development echelon, an air operation to destroy the "enemy" aviation at airfields, an airborne landing, a counterattack by an army strike group on a broken "enemy" in order to encircle and destroy it. Rifle, cavalry, mechanized, airborne and aviation formations participated in the maneuvers - in total more than 1300 tanks, 632 aircraft, 2276 various vehicles. The troops of the "red" were commanded by commander I.R. Apanasenko, "blue" - commander E.I. Kovtyukh.

⁷⁴ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 199

During the maneuvers, combat actions of mechanized and cavalry formations were played out to a great depth, forcing the Berezina River from the move, including tanks under water. Before the start of the crossing, aviation put up a smoke screen, which allowed the first landing echelon to quickly seize a bridgehead and, for the first time in practice, ensure that mechanized units cross the river without waiting for the approach of rifle troops. At one of the stages, a combined airborne assault was used. First, the 47th Special Purpose Aviation Brigade (1,800 paratroopers) landed, then an assault force (5,700 fighters) with tanks, guns, military and transport equipment was landed. The forcing of the Berezina by units of the 4th Don Cossack Division was instructive. After a 30-minute artillery preparation, the forward detachments of the division's units approached the river on a wide front. A flight of aircraft flying low along the riverbed set up a smoke

screen, successfully covering them from the "enemy". When the smoke began to dissipate, the Cossack divisions were already hooked on the opposite bank, and soon the entire division crossed the Berezina and, knocking over the "enemy", began to successfully move forward.

behind

G.K. Zhukov, recalling the maneuvers of 1936, wrote: "... We knew that People's Commissar of Defense K.E. Voroshilov and other military leaders arrived at the maneuvers. Naturally, each unit, each formation was waiting for the arrival of K.E. Voroshilov. Well, we, the commanders of the 4th Cossack division, considered it in the order of things that the people's commissar would definitely be with us ... Before we had time to unfold the maps, a line of cars drove up to the command post. K.E. Voroshilov, A.I. Egorov and I.P. Uborevich got out of the first car ... We realized that the people's commissar would personally observe the crossing of the river ... At the analysis of the maneuvers, the people's commissar highly appreciated our division, praising the the innovation of tankers who risked crossing such a deep river as the Berezina under their own power ... "75 According to the chief of staff of the division, L.F. Minyuk, in the difficult and tense conditions of the exercises, one remarkable feature of Zhukov was revealed. Georgy Konstantinovich knew

how to sleep, listen and think at the same time. It was the second day of maneuvers. The division received the task of "combat operations" belatedly. Zhukov had just returned from the regiment, which was on the "front line" and "waged the night battle." In the tent of the chief of staff of the division, the two of them studied the order of the corps commander at a small camp table. Zhukov, having made a decision, instructed the chief of staff to draft an order. He did not have time to take up the pen, as the division commander immediately fell asleep while sitting. Having finished work, the chief of staff woke Zhukov and began to read the draft order, but before he had time to read a couple of lines, he heard a loud sniffing and saw that Zhukov was sleeping again. As soon as he stopped reading, Zhukov immediately demanded to continue. Having finished reading, Minyuk began to decide what to do next: wake him up or let him sleep, and sign the order himself? And suddenly the sleeping Zhukov asked to repeat the fourth paragraph, after which he suggested changing the wording of the task to one of the regiments.

This amazing ability was useful to Zhukov later. In

75 Ibid. pp. 202-204

during the Great Patriotic War, he listened to the reports to I.V. Stalin while sleeping and made his own adjustments to them, and then listened again and signed. When asked how he manages to sleep, listen and think at the same time, he replied that "the war will teach everything, and it is already the fourth one behind me."

The maneuvers of the troops of the Belarusian Military District confirmed the high level of development of military art and showed the good training of the personnel. The commanders and staffs skillfully managed the battle, ensuring the interaction of all branches of the troops in a rapidly changing environment. The troops demonstrated the ability to boldly land, quickly engage in battle and decisively conduct combat operations. The correctness of the main provisions of the theories of deep operation and deep combat was confirmed. The experience of the maneuvers was used in the finalization of the draft of the Provisional Field Manual of the Red Army, put into effect by the order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR of December 30, 1936.

The joy in the division from the success achieved in the maneuvers was overshadowed by the serious illness of its commander. "... In the summer, Georgy invited my family to Slutsk during his vacation," M.M. Pilikhin later said. - In 1936, field exercises began to be held there. The day was sunny and stuffy. Zhukov and the chief of staff were treated to cold milk. The next day they felt bad - they fell ill with brucellosis. They were sent to Minsk, and then to Moscow to the Central Military Hospital, where they were treated for 7-8 months. At this time, Klavdia Ilyinichnaya (wife of M.M. Pilikhin. - V.D.) and I visited Georgy. Alexandra Dievna arrived with her daughter Erochka. They lived with us in Bryusov Lane. My brother recovered, he was sent from the hospital with his family to the south to a rest home, he had a good rest there and returned to Moscow ... "

Era Georgievna also writes about her father's illness: "... In 1936, he became seriously ill with brucellosis, from which he almost died. Serious complications forced him to lie down and be treated for a long time, but he completely overcame the disease, as the doctors believed, only thanks to good health and willpower. Scrupulously following the instructions of the doctors, he quit smoking forever, although he had smoked for many years before that. Unfortunately, the maneuvers held in the

Belarusian Military District in 1936 were the last exercises of such a large scale in the prewar years. Since the summer of 1937, a wave of repressions hit the army and navy. It was directed at the alleged participants in the "military conspiracy in the Red Army." S.P. Uritsky, in his letter to K.E. Voroshilov dated September 27, 1937, noted: "... May 1, 1937, after the parade in your apartment, the leader (we are talking about I.V. Stalin. - V.D.) said that the enemies would be exposed, the Party would grind them to powder, and raised a toast to those who, remaining faithful, would worthily take their place at the glorious table on the October anniversary."⁷⁶ Many prominent military figures were soon arrested, including M. .N. Tukhachevsky, who was considered the "head of the conspiracy." On June 11, 1937, the Special Judicial Presence of the Supreme Court of the USSR, having considered the case of the "anti-Soviet Trotskyist military organization" in the Red Army, sentenced M.N. Tukhachevsky, I.P. Uborevich, A.I. Kork, I.E. Yakir to death , R.P.Eideman, V.K.Putnu, V.M.Primakov, B.M.Feldman. Then came new

⁷⁶ Op. Quoted from: News of the Central Committee of the CPSU. 1989. No. 4. S. 47.

arrests and executions. K.E. Voroshilov at a meeting of the Military Council under the NPO of the USSR on November 29, 1938, proudly said: "Throughout 1937 and 1938, we had to mercilessly clean our ranks, mercilessly cutting off the infected parts of the body to living, healthy meat, cleansed ourselves of vile treacherous rot ... Suffice it to say that for all the time we cleared out more than four tens of thousands of people. This figure is impressive. But precisely because they dealt with it so ruthlessly, we can now say with confidence that our ranks are strong and that the Red Army now has its completely loyal and honest command and political staff. 77

After the execution of M.N. Tukhachevsky and other military leaders and military theorists, Voroshilov ordered that topographic maps be filled with ink names with the names of enemies of the people and only after that the maps should be issued for use. On May 21, 1938, he signed an order to cancel the 1935 Instructions for Deep Combat,⁷⁸ which was developed under the direct supervision of Tukhachevsky and contained in a concentrated form the highest achievements of Soviet military-theoretical thought of that time. The destruction of the most trained commanders and chiefs, the ban on the use in combat training of documents developed with their participation, had a negative impact on the training of troops, headquarters and commanders at the end of the 30s. By 1938, the repressions had acquired such gigantic proportions that in January of that year the Plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks had to consider the issue "On the mistakes of party organizations in the expulsion of communists from the party, on the formal bureaucratic attitude towards appeals of those expelled from the party and on measures to eliminate these shortcomings. The resolution of the Plenum, on the one hand, demanded an end to indiscriminate repressions and carefully analyze each individual accusation against a member of

the party, and on the other hand, gave the directive "to completely exterminate the disguised enemies." With this decision, Stalin and his inner circle misled ordinary communists and the people, suggesting that the repressions were the work of local party functionaries, who had not yet discovered "enemies". In pursuance of the decision of the Plenum, a commission is being created in the People's Commissariat of Defense to work with letters and complaints. The work of this commission revealed a horrific picture of the state of command personnel in the Red Army. Stalin and his entourage considered that it was absolutely impossible to finish off the army, and the scope of repressions began to wane. How did G.K. Zhukov feel about repressions in the Red Army? In his memoirs he writes:

"As you know, the Soviet people ruthlessly crushed the White Guard counter-revolution within our borders by their struggle, by their blood they proved to the Motherland and the foreign interventionists and banished them. However, the Soviet people of the party had to pay ^{And} their unshakable devotion to the cause of our Leninist party. heavily for the unprincipled suspiciousness of the political leadership of the country, JV Stalin. which was headed by the armed forces, most of the commanders ^{behind} in

77 RGVA. F. 31 983. Op. 3. D. 152. L. 151–152.

78 RGVA. F. 25 871. Op. 2. D. 1275. L. 192, 324.

of the units. There were great ^{And} fleets, members of the Military Councils, commanders of the troops of the districts in a terrible situation. Nobody ^{commissars of corps formations, commanders and among honest employees of state arrest} to nobody and security agencies. The country was ^B people began to be afraid of each other, avoided meetings if it was necessary - they tried to talk

Not trusted, no ^{And} conversations, ^V the presence of third parties - witnesses. An unprecedented slanderous epidemic unfolded. They often slandered close friends. And all this was done out of fear that this terrible situation continued to ^{on} crystal clear people ^A Sometimes on their escalate "And" More and more new ones were put forward to replace those arrested. be suspicious ^V disloyalty. ^{.79} Further he notes: new and persons who had significantly less knowledge, less experience, had to do a lot of work on themselves in ^{And} them order to be worthy military leaders of an operational-strategic scale, skillful educators of the district troops. Almost 100 percent of the commanders of the corps were arrested in the Belarusian military district

corps commanders. Instead, divisions were put forward, surviving ^{.80} from arrests"

The disease that overtook Zhukov after the exercises not only put him out of action for a long time, but also, possibly, saved him from repression. In the meantime, the former commander of the 7th Samara Cavalry Division, K.K. Rokossovsky, who once gave G.K. Zhukov attestation, was arrested. And here it was not far from Zhukov's connection with the "enemy of the people." Georgy Konstantinovich's soul was restless. He knew all these people well, highly valued and did not hide his attitude towards them even after their arrest. At the end of June 1937, the commander of the 3rd cavalry corps, D. Serdich, was also arrested as an "enemy of the people". Two weeks later, G.K. Zhukov was summoned to Minsk in the car of the commander of the district troops, whose duties at that time were performed by commander V.M. Mulin (two months later he was also arrested). About what happened in the commander's car, Zhukov tells in detail in "Memoirs and Reflections".

In the car, Zhukov was received by the newly appointed member of the Military Council of the district, F.I. Golikov (future Marshal of the Soviet Union). After asking a series of biographical questions, Golikov asked if Zhukov had any of his relatives or friends who had been arrested. Georgy Konstantinovich replied that he did not know, since he did not maintain contact with his numerous relatives. As for close relatives, mothers and sisters, they currently live in the village of Strelkovka and work on the collective farm. Of acquaintances and friends, many were arrested, including I.P. Uborevich, commanders D. Serdich, L.Ya. Vainer, E.I. Kovtyukh, I.S. Kutyakov, I.D. Rokossovsky, division commander B. K. Verkhovsky. When asked by Golikov which of the arrested Zhukov was friends with, the answer was: "I was friends with Rokossovsky and Danila Serdich. He studied with Rokossovsky in the same group at the advanced training courses for cavalry commanders in the city of Leningrad and worked together in the 7th Samara Cavalry Division. Was friends with the comcor

79 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 220.

80 Ibid. pp. 229–230.

Kosogov and commander Verkhovsky while working together in the Cavalry Inspectorate. I considered these people great patriots of our Motherland and honest communists. Golikov asked a new question: "Do you now have the same opinion about them?" Zhukov replied: "Yes, and now." To the question: "Isn't it dangerous for the

future commander to praise the enemies of the people?" - Zhukov replied that he did not know why they were arrested, and he thinks that there was some kind of mistake. Golikov did not fail to take advantage of the report of the commissar of the 3rd Cavalry Corps Jung about Zhukov's harshness and rudeness in his treatment of subordinate commanders and his underestimation of the role and importance of political workers, that allegedly with the consent of Georgy Konstantinovich, his wife baptized daughter Ella in the church.

"I am not harsh with everyone, but only with those who negligently carry out the work entrusted to him and irresponsibly carry out their duty of service. As for the role and importance of political workers, I do not appreciate those who formally fulfill their party duty, do not work on themselves and do not help commanders in solving educational problems, those who criticize demanding commanders, engage in demagoguery where it is necessary to show the Bolshevik firmness and perseverance," replied Zhukov. He called the story of baptism a foolish invention and nonsense.⁸¹

Further conversation was interrupted by the arrival of V.M. Mulin, acting commander of the district troops, who said that the Military Council of the district was proposing to appoint Georgy Konstantinovich to the post of commander of the 3rd cavalry corps.

The decision had to wait about a month. On July 22, 1937, by order of the People's Commissar of Defense, Zhukov was appointed commander of the 3rd Cavalry Corps. Summing up his activities as division commander, he noted:

"I worked as a division commander for more than four years, and all these years I lived with one thought: to make the division entrusted to me the best in the ranks of the Red Army, the most advanced. A lot of effort, energy and labor was invested in the preparation of the division in order to pull it out of the breakthrough, to teach commanding cadres and staffs the art of modern tactics, organization and methods of managing subunits, units and divisions. I do not presume to say that we did everything then. There were

mistakes, blunders and miscalculations on our part, but with a clear conscience I can say that the commanders and political workers could not give more in the preparation of the division, and they gave everything they had.⁸² We add that many commanders of the 4th regiments cavalry Don Cossack division, which was called the "Zhukovskaya", later became prominent military leaders.

Parts of the 3rd Cavalry Corps were stationed in Minsk and its environs. At that time, the state border with Poland passed not far from the city, and the corps always had to be in full combat readiness. Zhukov plunged headlong into a new job. He, according to the already established tradition, began to get acquainted with the state of affairs in all parts of the corps in the field. It immediately became clear that in connection with the arrests, the training of command and political cadres had dropped sharply, the commanders

⁸¹ Ibid. pp. 222–223.

⁸² Ibid. pp. 209–210

the exactingness to oneself and subordinates has decreased and, as a result, the discipline and service of all personnel have weakened. "In a number of cases, they them the labels of the "enemy approach" of And tried to terrorize the demanding demagogues raised their heads, sewing on the personnel, To education

Zhukov wrote. — The combat units of the 24th Cavalry Division fell And political training in especially sharply. Division housing and training base near the city of Lepel, stood in completion. to all this, moods, unhealthy And her were still far away. On this basis, there was a lot of moods, were added, and to the arrests of commanders. There were those who engaged in malicious slander against honest to undermine the commanding staff. I had to related With And

confidence in them on the part of the soldiers and the state of affairs abruptly intervene, some resolutely pull back to put the question in the way that the interests of the case demanded. And True, when I personally did this, in a number of cases, increased harshness was allowed, which was immediately taken advantage of by some unscrupulous workers of the division. complaint about the education of personnel "Zhukov"

The next day, the state security on messages rained down on me V county With of the commander of the 3rd cavalry corps. Golikov, letters "about the enemy side co

. 83

Soon Zhukov received a report from the commander of the 27th Cavalry Division, V.E. Belokoskov, that discipline and the entire service had fallen sharply in the division. When Zhukov asked what the division commander was doing personally, he said that he was being sorted out in the party organization tonight, and tomorrow they would probably be sent to prison. Zhukov decided to immediately leave for the division and sort out the situation. V.E. Belokoskov struck Zhukov with his appearance: he was excessively pale, there were dark hollows under his eyes, his lips twitched nervously after each phrase. When asked what happened to him, Vasily Evlampievich replied that now at the party meeting he would be expelled from the party, and he prepared a bundle with linen. Information at the meeting was made by the secretary of the divisional party commission, who said that Belokoskov was in close relations with the "enemies of the people" D. Serdich, N.A. Jung, I.P. Uborevich and others, and therefore could not enjoy the trust of the party. In addition, Belokoskov is not sensitive enough to commanders, political workers, and is too demanding in his service. The discussion took about three hours. No one said a single word in defense of Belokoskov, and things were clearly moving

towards his expulsion from the ranks of the party. Novikov, acting commissar of the corps, essentially supported the speakers and concluded that Belokoskov did not justify the title of party member. G.K. Zhukov, after carefully listening to the speakers, asked for the floor and said rather sharply:

"I have known Belokoskov for a long time as an honest communist, sensitive comrade, excellent commander. As for his official connection with Uborevich, Serdich, Rokossovsky official, in addition, it is still unknown, Serdich, Rokossovsky, since no one knows the and others, for that with this connection it was purely reason for the arrest, so why should we run ahead of the relevant Uborevich was arrested, authorities, it is our duty to objectively figure out which from

By

V degree

of the arrested persons responsibility. As And inform us, the culpability behind What their attracted then To
for other issues of fundamental importance, conclusions from criticism " it's the little things and don't have
A comrade Belokoskov will do for himself

84

After the speech of the corps commander, no one else began to take the floor, and at the party meeting it was decided to "propose to V.E. Belokoskov to take into account the speeches of the communists in his work."

we walked furtively wiped With party meetings, "When I I saw how Vasily Evlampievich I thought that
away tears, Zhukov noted later. — He
wept from the realization that he had remained in the party and could continue for the benefit
ranks of work for him, on the good of the people on of our Motherland. I didn't go to
believing that let the alarm for the party He alone will survive the past hard and spiritual joy for the justice of the
organization " your destiny decision

85

The intervention of Georgy Konstantinovich saved the life of a conscientious and intelligent commander of the Red Army. During the Great Patriotic War, he became one of the main organizers of the automotive service and the supply of troops. After the war, Vasily Evlampievich was Deputy Chief of the Logistics of the Armed Forces, Deputy Minister of the Armed Forces (Minister of War, Minister of Defense) for the construction and quartering of troops. During his seven months as commander of the 3rd Cavalry Corps, Zhukov was able to revive his reputation as one of the best formations in the Belarusian Military District. Parts of the corps successfully operated on district maneuvers, which were carried out in the fall of 1937 under the leadership of the new commander of the Belarusian Military

District, Commander of the 1st Rank I.P. Belov (soon he suffered the same tragic fate as the previous commanders - he was arrested as an "enemy of the people"). By the way, together with the People's Commissar of Defense of the Headquarters K.E. Voroshilov of the General B.M. Shaposhnikov, generals and officers of the German General Staff were present at the maneuvers as guests. On February 25, 1938, G.K. Zhukov, who had recently received the military rank of division commander "ahead of schedule and out of turn," was appointed commander of the 6th cavalry corps. Prior to this, the corps was commanded by an active participant in the Civil War, E.I. Goryachev, who was appointed to the post of deputy commander of the Kyiv Special Military District. However, soon at one of the party meetings, he was charged with having links with "enemies of the people." Not wanting to be repressed by the state security agencies, Goryachev committed suicide. The situation in the corps in connection with the arrests of experienced commanders was no better than in other formations of the district. An atmosphere of denunciation and suspicion reigned in the units, which was created by L. Z. Mekhlis, who was appointed in 1937 head of the Main Directorate

of Propaganda and Agitation of the Red Army. Many of those who escaped repression turned into scammers, and according to the order established by him, an avalanche of reports came to the Mekhlis containing slander against the commanders of various

84 Ibid. S. 226.

85 Ibid.

degrees. Zhukov had to repeatedly intervene in the work of political agencies in order to stop the persecution of his subordinates.

Taking command of the 6th Cavalry Corps, Zhukov focused on operational training. This was required by the order of the People's Commissar of Defense of December 14, 1937 No. 0109 "On the results of the combat training of the Red Army for 1937 and tasks for 1938", which noted the need "to continue training the Ground Forces and the Air Force in close cooperation to master complex combat in maneuverable conditions and in the struggle for fortified positions, relying on modern technical means of combat (aviation, artillery, tanks), giving their due place and taking into account the importance and role of infantry in combined arms combat."⁸⁶

In the troops, first of all, the issues of the combat use of cavalry as part of a mechanized cavalry army were worked out. At the time, these were big, problematic issues. In the military theory of that time, it was assumed that a horse-mechanized army, consisting of 3–4 cavalry divisions, 2–3 tank brigades and a motorized rifle division, in close cooperation with bomber and fighter aircraft, and subsequently with airborne units, would be able to solve major operational tasks as part of the front, contributing to the successful implementation of strategic plans. Zhukov, given that the future largely belongs to tanks and mechanized formations, demanded that commanders and headquarters work out in detail the issues of interaction with tank troops and the organization of anti-tank defense. In field exercises and maneuvers, Zhukov had to act with the 21st separate tank brigade (brigade commander M.I. Potapov) and with the 3rd separate tank brigade (brigade commander V.V. Novikov). Both of these commanders were colleagues of Zhukov in the past, and they understood each other perfectly. Dark clouds of repression continued to hang over the heads of military leaders, and Zhukov was no exception. From the corps commissar Fomin, he unexpectedly learns that on the active side of the communists of the 4th division, 3rd and 6th corps, he will be dismantled in party order. Fomin did not explain the reason, but suggested the theme of the labor meeting

did not constitute.

The next day about 80 communists gathered. The meeting began with the reading of statements from the 4th, 24th and 7th divisions. They indicated that Zhukov undeservedly punished many commanders and political workers, rudely scolded and did not promote them to higher positions, that he deliberately froze experienced personnel, thereby deliberately harming the Armed Forces. The essence of all the speeches boiled down to one thing: in the education of cadres, Zhukov used "enemy methods." Zhukov was also reminded of his good attitude towards Uborevich, Serdich, Vainer and other "enemies of the people" and the fact that Uborevich, when checking the division, dined personally with Zhukov. As expected, those who submitted applications spoke first of all in the debate. The head of the political department of the 4th Cavalry Division S.P.

Tikhomirov, with whom Zhukov worked together for several years, also took the floor. Everyone expected a principled political assessment from Tikhomirov

⁸⁶ RGVA. F. 4. Op. 15. D. 82. L. 234 rev.

activities of the commander-one-man Zhukov. "But, To unfortunately
his speech was a vivid example of an opportunist, maneuvering between accusers, later noted
George Konstantinovich. — He the result was an unprincipled attempt to get away with a A V
direct answer to the rights of Zhukov? Tikhomirov evaded the questions: how right I Tikhomirov direct answer. I told the
activities, and it worked out. And V how Not communists that I expected an objective assessment of my from
claims against me " Therefore, I was more than right in order to reject the far-fetched ones, I'll say what I'm wrong about,
but this is not

and in

. 87

Zhukov, in his speech, admitted that he had breakdowns, and he was wrong in speaking sharply with those commanders
and political workers who complained about him here that, as a communist, he "had an obligation to be more restrained in
dealing with subordinates help more with a kind word and show less nervousness." Regarding the fact that "Uborevich, an
enemy of the people, dined" with him, Zhukov noted that "the commander of the troops of the Uborevich district dined" with him,
and then no one knew that he was an enemy of the people. He also responded to Tikhomirov's accusation of underestimating
political workers, emphasizing that he really does not like and does not appreciate

help me well with the 4th Cavalry Division "such political workers as, for example, Tikhomirov,
V who did not V
And always went away solving complex issues, showing unprincipled softness, undemanding, even
detrimental to the cause. Such political workers want to be the kind uncles of the Bolshevik style of work. I respect such political
workers, who help their commanders to successfully solve the tasks of combat training, who know behind business account, But
This Not how to work themselves, rolling up their sleeves, tirelessly spending their lives instructing the party and
government, the commander, where he is not his job

V

And, Not embarrassed, they tell their rights where they
made a mistake, so that the commander takes into account V
wouldn't make mistakes" I . 88

After such a detailed speech by Zhukov, the communists decided "to limit themselves to a discussion of the issue and
take note of the explanation of Comrade G.K. Zhukov."

After the party meeting, Zhukov could not resist and asked Tikhomirov why he said something different today than he
always did when they worked together in the division. Zhukov was interested in what corresponded to the truth - Tikhomirov's
previous judgments about him or the characterization that was given to them today. Tikhomirov replied: "Of course, the one that
he always said. But what I said today should have been said." As Georgy Konstantinovich recalled, he could not resist and said
sharply: "I am very sorry that I once considered you a principled comrade, and you are just an opportunist." Later, when he was
already Minister of Defense, Zhukov received three letters from Tikhomirov. These letters remained unanswered. The date of
the analysis of the Zhukov case is visible from an autobiography written on June 13, 1938: "I have a party penalty - a" reprimand
"of January 28, 1938 for rudeness, for clamping down on self-criticism, underestimating political work, for insufficient fight
against fraud. Neither I nor my

wife had and have no connection with the enemies.

87 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 231–232.

88 Ibid. pp. 232–233.

Georgy Konstantinovich, extremely busy with official affairs, always tried to find time to work on operational strategic issues, read historical materials about past wars, classic works on military art and various memoirs. Especially much was given to him by the personal development of operational-tactical tasks for conducting divisional and corps team games, command-staff exercises, and exercises with troops. "After each such teaching, I felt," he recalled, "that I was gaining more and more knowledge and experience, and this was absolutely necessary not only for my own growth, but also for the young cadres who were entrusted to me. It was nice when a lesson or exercise with a unit, staff or group of officers brought tangible benefits to its participants. I considered this the greatest reward for work. If no one learned anything new in the lesson and did not draw knowledge from the personal luggage of the senior commander, then such an activity, in my opinion, is a direct reproach to the conscience of the commander and emphasizes his inferiority. And to be honest, we had quite a few commanders who, in terms of knowledge, were no higher than their subordinates."⁸⁹ In June 1938, he was appointed deputy commander of the troops of the Belarusian Military District for cavalry. "We moved to Smolensk, where the district headquarters was then," Era Georgievna recalled. - We got an apartment in the wing of a large beautiful house, looking at the square, in which the families of

the district command lived ... Dad, as always, was busy at work. Mom "twisted" with us ... I was already ten years old, and I helped my mother as much as I could.

Opposite, across the square, there was school number 7, in the 3rd grade "B" of which I studied for an incomplete academic year ... There I was accepted as a pioneer. This event in my life was marked by our family "campaign" in the photo studio ... My sister and I are dressed in traditional sailor suits for that time. I'm wearing a pioneer tie with a badge. Father, a little plump, in a gray carpeted tunic, with two orders and a medal (the Order of the Red Banner, the Order of Lenin and the medal "XX Years of the Red Army", the last awarded in February 1938. - V.D.) on his chest, with two rhombuses. The temples are a little gray, but the eyes are still young.

At the end of May 1939, G.K. Zhukov conducted in Minsk, at the headquarters of the 3rd Cavalry Corps, an analysis of the command and staff exercises. Numerous maps and diagrams are hung on the walls and racks, which clearly show the decisions made by the commanders of the corps and divisions. Looking at these cards, Zhukov can hardly restrain his irritation: all decisions are of the same type, most of them lack creative thought, there is a lack of education, experience, and military outlook. And what to take from these boys? Yesterday's commanders of battalions and even companies became commanders of divisions and regiments instead of experienced commanders who were repressed and dismissed from the army. Suddenly, the door of the hall opened, and a member of the Military

Council of the district, divisional commissar I. Z. Susaykov, entered. He quickly came close to Zhukov and said that he was urgently summoned to Moscow. Half an hour later, Zhukov was already at the district headquarters. They didn't tell him anything

⁸⁹ Ibid. S. 234.

new. There was no time to go home, and the suitcase with the most necessary was right here, in the office. All that was left was to call his wife. Her anxious questions, interspersed with sobs, listened rather calmly, perfectly understanding her condition, and, as best he could, tried to calm her down. But his own soul was restless - after all, it was 1939 in the yard.

Chapter IV. The prototype of future victories

"21.30. 24.5.39. From Moscow to Smolensk.

Dear Shurik!

Today was at the drug commissar. Received exceptionally well. I'm going on an extended business trip. The People's Commissar said: you need to charge for about 3 months. I have this request for you: firstly, do not give in to whimpering, hold on steadfastly and with dignity, try to endure an unpleasant separation with honor. Bear in mind, my dear, that I have a very hard job ahead of me, and as a member of the party, the commander of the Red Army, I must do it with honor and exemplary. You know me that I'm not accustomed to perform the service poorly, but for this I need to be calm for you and my daughters. I ask you to create this peace for me. Use all your strength, but achieve this, otherwise you cannot consider yourself my friend of life. As for me, be 100 percent calm.

You have hurt me deeply with your tears. Well, I know it's hard for you too.

I kiss you hard, hard. Kisses to my lovely daughters. Your Georges.

He wrote about

tears not by chance - he could not stand them. And he signed "Georges" because his wife called him that, and he liked this name in his youth. Having finished the letter, Georgy Konstantinovich mentally returned to the events of the past day.

In the morning he arrived in Moscow and immediately went to the People's Commissariat of Defense, where he was met by R.P. Khmelnitsky, who was on special assignments under the People's Commissar of Defense. It turned out that K.E. Voroshilov was already waiting. Zhukov himself tells about this meeting:

"Having entered the office, I reported to the People's Commissar about my arrival. K.E. Voroshilov, after inquiring about his health, said:

- Japanese troops suddenly invaded our friendly Mongolia, which the Soviet government, by agreement of March 12, 1936, undertook to protect from any external aggression. Here is a map of the invasion area with the situation on May 30th.

I went to the map.

"Here," the people's commissar pointed out, "for a long time small provocative raids were carried out on the Mongolian border guards, and here the Japanese troops, as part of the group of troops of the Hailar garrison, invaded the territory of the MPR and attacked the Mongolian border units covering a section of the area east of the Khalkhin Gol River. "I think," continued the People's Commissar, "that a serious military adventure has been started. In any case, the matter will not end there... Can you fly there immediately and, if necessary, take command of the troops?"⁹⁰

Zhukov answered in the affirmative. On the same day, at the direction of the People's Commissar of Defense, he was received by Commander I.V. Smorodinov, Acting Deputy Chief of the General Staff. At the General Staff, Zhukov was briefed on the situation that had developed in Mongolia, and upon arrival was asked to find out what was going on there, and frankly report his opinion.

From the General Staff, Zhukov went to Bryusov Lane, where his cousin M.M. Pilikhin lived with his family, his wife Klavdiya Ilyinichnaya and daughter Rita. Here the guest was fed and watered. We talked late. They told each other how they lived, what they did. And early in the morning Georgy Konstantinovich left for the airport. Saying goodbye, he said: "Either I will return with gifts, or ... do not remember me

dashing."

"Soon our plane was already in the air and headed for Mongolia," recalls Zhukov. - The last stop before leaving the country was made in Chita. We were invited by the Military Council of the District (meaning the Military Council of the Trans-Baikal Military District. - V.D.) for information. The commander of the district, V.F. Yakovlev, and a member of the Military Council, D.A. Gapanovich, met at the headquarters. They reported on the latest developments. What was new was that Japanese aviation penetrated deep into the territory of the MPR and chased our vehicles, shooting them from the air.

By the morning of June 5, according to Zhukov, he arrived in Tamtsak-Bulak, at the headquarters of the 57th Special Rifle Corps, which was deployed on the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic in accordance with the protocol of mutual assistance between the USSR and the MPR dated March 12, 1936. By the beginning of June 1939, the corps numbered about 5.6 thousand people,⁹¹ it was commanded by divisional commander N.V. Feklenko.

Georgy Konstantinovich mentions Feklenko in his memoirs little and unflatteringly. In the future, lieutenant general of tank troops, Feklenko in the first half of the 30s commanded a mechanized regiment, since 1936 - the 7th motorized armored brigade, and since September 1938 - the 57th special rifle corps. After Zhukov replaced him in this post in June 1939, Feklenko was sent to the Soviet Union and in 1940 was appointed commander of the 15th Panzer Division, and in January of the following year, commander of the 19th Mechanized Corps. In this position, he entered the Great Patriotic War, participated in border battles, then commanded the 38th Army, the Stalingrad Military District, was an assistant to the commander of the troops of the Southern Front for formations, deputy head of the Main Armored Directorate, in June-July 1942 he commanded the 17th m tank corps. Subsequently, Feklenko headed the Tula and Stalingrad armored centers, the department of armored and mechanized troops of the Red Army, the Kharkov military district.

Zhukov, having arrived in Tamtsak-Bulak, discussed the state of affairs with Feklenko, the commissar of the ChM.S. Nikishev corps and the chief of staff A.M. Kushchev. Kushchev immediately made a reservation that the situation had not yet been sufficiently studied. This gave Georgy Konstantinovich a reason

⁹¹ Russia and the USSR in the Wars of the 20th Century: A Statistical Study. M., 2001. S. 176.

conclude that the corps command is not in control of the situation. He asked Feklenko if it was possible to control troops 120 kilometers from the battlefield. The corps commander replied: "We are sitting here, of course, far away, but our area of events is not operationally prepared. There is not a single kilometer of telephone and telegraph lines ahead, there is no prepared command post, landing sites. To Zhukov's question about what is being done to ensure that all this happens, Feklenko replied: "We are thinking of sending for timber and proceeding with equipping the command post." "It turned out that no one from the command of the corps, except for the regimental commissar M.S. Nikishev, was in the area of events," writes Zhukov. - I suggested that the commander immediately go to the front line and carefully understand the situation there. Referring to the fact that he could be called to the apparatus from Moscow at any moment, he offered to go with me to M.S.Nikishev."⁹² Here we interrupt the thread of our story for a while. Obviously, an attentive reader has already seen a contradiction in the

chronology of the events described and asked himself the question: how could Voroshilov show Zhukov a map with the situation on May 30 if their meeting took place earlier? The dates and facts reconstructed on the basis of archival materials indicate that in the memoirs of G.K. Zhukov, for various reasons and without any intention, a number of inaccuracies were admitted, which migrated to other books dedicated to the commander. But before we restore the true picture of events, let us recall the causes of the conflict in the region of the Khalkhin Gol River. In September 1931, Japanese troops began the occupation of Manchuria and approached the state border of the USSR. At that time, the General Staff of Japan adopted the "Basic Provisions of the Plan of War against the USSR", which provided for the

advancement of troops east of the Greater Khingan and the rapid defeat of the main forces of the Red Army. Considering that by the mid-1930s the USSR had strengthened its defense capabilities in the Far East, the military-political leadership of Japan decided to conclude an alliance with Germany. Italy later joined. All this inspired Japan to expand its military aggression in Asia, primarily against China. In January 1935, Japanese troops invaded the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic and captured part of the eastern ledge of the territory of the MPR. Later, some Japanese historians tried to drop charges against the Japanese government for the conflict in the Khalkhin Gol region. Thus, in June 1989, at an international scientific conference in Ulaanbaatar, in which the author of this book was a participant, the Japanese researcher Dr. Ushijima in his speech blamed the conflict on the command of the Kwantung Army, the actions of which "were not always supported by the General Staff of Japan and its government" .

On June 5, 1935, negotiations between the Manchurian and Mongolian delegations began at the Manchuria station with the aim of peacefully resolving disputed border issues. However, an agreement could not be reached. The work of the permanent mixed commission, set up in August, was not crowned with success either. Therefore, in January 1936, when the situation was tense to the limit, the government

⁹² Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 241–242.

The Mongolian People's Republic turned to the Soviet leadership with a request for military assistance. In February of the same year, the USSR declared its readiness to provide assistance to the MPR in view of the Japanese aggression. On March 12, the Protocol on Mutual Assistance between the USSR and the MPR was signed in

Ulaanbaatar for a period of 10 years. By the time the Soviet-Mongolian protocol was signed, military clashes between the Japanese-Manchurian and Mongolian troops continued. "The government of the Mongolian People's Republic has repeatedly made statements about the increasing attacks on our territory by the Japanese-Manchurian troops," said the note of the government of the Mongolian People's Republic, sent on March 30, 1936 to the government of Manchukuo. "However, while speaking out for peace in words, your side does not stop provocative actions on our border, and even more inflames the already tense situation."

But the Japanese government continued to increase its aggressive actions in the region. In July 1937, after provoking an incident at the Lugouqiao Bridge near Beijing, Japan launched a large-scale aggression against China. In July-August 1938, in the area of Lake Khasan, a clash occurred between Japanese and Soviet troops, which ended in the defeat of the Japanese units. In the autumn of the same year, the General Staff of the Japanese Army began to develop a plan for a war against the USSR, code-named Operation Plan No. 8. This plan had two options: "A" ("Ko") - delivering the main blow in the eastern direction against the troops of the USSR in Primorye, and "B" ("Otsu") - an attack on the USSR where it does not expect - in the western direction, through Mongolia (Japanese words "Ko" and "Otsu" mean respectively "first" and "second" - V.D.). For this, railways, highways and airfields were hastily built on the territory of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia. On April 25, 1939, the General Staff of the Japanese Army, having assessed the military-political situation in Europe, where Germany was preparing for the outbreak of World War II, sent the so-called "Principles for resolving border conflicts between Manchukuo and the USSR" to the troops. In the fourth paragraph of this document, it was written: "In case the border is not clear, the military command must determine the border at its own discretion and avoid unnecessary conflicts."⁹³

On May 15, 1939, the government of Manchukuo sent a note to the government of the MPR, which stated: Khalkhin-Gol River - V.D.). Our border guards were forced to open fire and drive them back, but the soldiers of Outer Mongolia still apparently continue to be in the indicated area. At the same time, the government of Manchukuo expresses the most severe protest to the government of the MPR against these illegal actions and at the same time demands the withdrawal of its troops in order to establish normal border conditions."⁹⁴

The government of the Mongolian People's Republic, in turn, considered the Japanese and Manchurians guilty of violating the border.

⁹³ Cit. Quoted from: Khalkhin-Gol: Fifty years later. (Materials of the "round table" of historians Soviet Union, Mongolia and Japan, August 1939) M., 1990. S. 30.

⁹⁴ RGVA. F. 37 977. Op. 1. D. 37. L. 21.

troops. It presented a number of documents to N.V. Feklenko, who, after studying them, reported to the USSR People's Commissariat of Defense in mid-May: "The documents were found, where the border is indicated exactly, according to maps and living people who once marked the border. A map was found dated July 5, 1887, compiled as a result of resolving border disputes between the Barguts (a Mongolian tribe. - V.D.) and the Khalkhas (Mongols). This dispute lasted about 5 years and as a result the border was drawn. A legend in the Manchu language is pasted on the map, certified by the head of the Manchu dynasty... Thus, all the events took place not on Manchu territory, but on the territory of the MPR."⁹⁵

By this time, the command of the Kwantung Army had concentrated the 23rd Infantry Division and several regiments of the Bargut cavalry in the disputed area, and the 2nd Combined Aviation Group in the Hailar area. The overall command of these troops was entrusted to Lieutenant General M. Kamatsubara, a generally recognized specialist on the Soviet Union. He spoke good Russian, from 1919 to 1921 he served as a deputy military attaché in Moscow, and in 1927-1930 as a military attaché. The chief of staff of the 23rd division was another expert on the Soviet Union, career intelligence officer Ts. Outi. In 1933-1935 he was a military attaché in Latvia, then for two years he headed the headquarters of a cavalry brigade in Manchuria. The personnel of the division had no combat experience and military training, but the command of the Japanese army believed that its leadership, who knew the military doctrine of the USSR well, would be able to organize the necessary training and training in the shortest possible time and successfully cope with the tasks.

In addition, the Japanese, not without reason, believed that they had chosen the area of combat operations well. In a military geographical reference prepared in October 1939 by employees of the headquarters of the 1st Army Group, it was noted that "the remoteness of the area on the territory of the MPR created exceptional difficulty in concentrating and feeding our troops with everything necessary, the prominence of the area towards the territory of Manchuria created favorable conditions in solving military problems by the Japanese command ... The capture of the area provided reliable cover for the future Khalun-Arshan-Ganchzhur railway . fulfillment of the task of destroying the troops of Outer Mongolia. On the morning of May 14, up to 300 Japanese soldiers and Bargut crossed

the border, reached the line of the Khalkhin-Gol River and occupied Dungur-Obo. On the same day and May 15, Japanese planes, violating the airspace of the Mongolian People's Republic, fired on the border guards and bombarded one of the border outposts. On the night of May 16, 14 vehicles with infantry arrived on the eastern shore of Khalkhin Gol, where the Japanese and Barguts were located. The troops of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army (hereinafter referred to as MNRA), exhausted by the mass repressions deployed by the marshal

Kh. Choibalsan, were unable to give a proper rebuff to the enemy. Former Commissioner of the 24th Khalkhingol Border

⁹⁵ Ibid. L. 55.

⁹⁶ RGVA. F. 32 113. Op. 1. D. 232. L. 471-472

detachment, retired lieutenant colonel B. Tsevegjav recalled: "In fact, our troops turned out to be decapitated and unprepared for a battle with such an enemy as the Kwantung Army. The main burden of this undeclared war was taken by the army of a faithful ally - the Soviet Union . corps to destroy the enemy. On May 16, he reported his decision to Moscow to Voroshilov.

The next day, a response was received from the General Staff signed by Smorodinov: "If the Japanese-Barguts continue active operations and further violate the border, report immediately to the people's commissar and do not start active operations without his permission, while preparing forces for the defeat ... Please take into account that the instruction of the people's commissar - not to start active operations without his special order - also applies to the 6th cavalry division. I ask you to convey this to Comrade. Choibalsan."98

K.E. Voroshilov was not consistent in his actions: on the one hand, he forbade active combat operations, and on the other, he constantly reproached the commander of the 57th Special Rifle Corps for indecision. So, on the evening of May 21, the People's Commissar, in a conversation with Feklenko, attacked him with reproaches and asked: "How long do you intend to endure the outrages that are played out in the area for which you bear all responsibility?" In response, Feklenko asked "to be allowed to act decisively and for real. Further insolence cannot be tolerated." However, Voroshilov demanded only to strengthen the enemy's reconnaissance and said: "Unfortunately, I can't allow you to take any action, because you, sitting in Ulaanbaatar, know less than we do about the enemy, and reasonable and serious people should not wave their fists in the air ". At the same time, he ordered: "The headquarters of the corps, you and Nikishev do not move anywhere from Ulaanbaatar yet." At the same time, the people's commissar instructed to send the chief of staff of brigade commander Kushchev to Tamtsak-Bulak and prepare one regiment of SB bombers and one fighter aviation regiment to reinforce the 57th Special Rifle Corps. On May 31, it was decided to send 35 fighter pilots to Mongolia, headed by the Deputy Chief of Aviation of the Red Army, Hero of the Soviet Union, commander Ya.V. Smushkevich.

In accordance with the instructions received, the corps headquarters on May 23 developed an action plan for conducting ground and air reconnaissance. It was assigned to the combined detachment of the corps, which was to act jointly with the 6th cavalry division of the MNRA, 6 squadrons of fighters were allocated for these purposes. Reproaching Feklenko for knowing

"less than ours about the enemy," Voroshilov understood that it was all the more impossible to understand the true state of affairs from Moscow. Therefore, on May 24, he signs a certificate of secondment to Mongolia of Divisional Commander Zhukov, Brigade Commander Denisov and Regimental Commissar Chernyshev. They were entrusted with "a thorough study and establishment of the causes of unsatisfactory

97 Op. Quoted from Komsomolskaya Pravda. 1989. May 11

98 RGVA. F. 37 977. Op. 1. D. 38. L. 14-18.

the work of the command and headquarters of the 57th separate corps during the conflict with the Japanese-Barguts from May 11 to 23, 1939 and the provision of direct assistance to the commander and commissar of the 57th separate corps on the spot. At the same time, Zhukov was instructed to study the work of directing the combat training of the ground units of the corps, Denisov - to check the activities of the commander of the Air Force Corps, Chernyshev - the state of party political work. At the same time, they were entrusted with "comprehensive verification of the activities of military advisers to the units of the MNRA."⁹⁹ So, on May 24, Zhukov was

instructed to leave for Mongolia with a purely inspection purpose. Later, in a conversation with the writer Konstantin Simonov, he described the background of this trip somewhat differently: "I went to Khalkhin Gol like this ... Stalin, discussing this

issue with Voroshilov in the presence of Timoshenko (commander of the Belarussian military district. - V.D.) and Ponomarenko, then secretary of the Central Committee of Belarus, asked Voroshilov: "Who is there, on Khalkhin Gol, in command of the troops?" - "Brigade Commander Feklenko". "Well, who is this Feklenko? What is he like?" asked Stalin. Voroshilov said that he could not answer this question precisely now, he personally did not know Feklenko and did not know what he was like. Stalin said with displeasure: "What is this? People are fighting, but you have no idea who is fighting there, who is in command of the troops? It is necessary to appoint someone else there to rectify the situation and be able to act proactively. So that he could not only correct the situation, but also, on occasion, slap the Japanese. Timoshenko said: "I have one candidate - the commander of the cavalry corps Zhukov." "Zhukov... Zhukov," said Stalin. "Something I don't remember this name." Then Voroshilov reminded him: "This is the same Zhukov who sent you and me a telegram in 1937 that he was being unfairly brought to party responsibility." "Well, how did it end?" Stalin asked. Voroshilov said that nothing, it turned out that there were no grounds for bringing the party to responsibility."¹⁰⁰ As you can see, the events here are presented from hearsay, and Zhukov was clearly misled by someone. As we have already found out, in the certificate of May 24 there was no hint of replacing Feklenko with Zhukov. Voroshilov's assertion that he does not personally know Feklenko is perplexing. Archival documents testify that on May 27, during a

conversation on a direct wire with Feklenko, the people's commissar said: "Why are you and Kushchev, who looked so good in Moscow, now lowered their wings and you have to pull your tongue every time you need to find out what you are doing?"¹⁰¹ It is also unclear why Georgy Konstantinovich forgot that by that time he held a different position - deputy commander of the Belorussian district.

⁹⁹ Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 98–99.

¹⁰⁰ Quote by: Simonov K.M. Notes on the biography of G.K. Zhukov // Military History Journal. 1987. No. 6. S. 52.

¹⁰¹ RGVA. F. 37 977. Op. 1. D. 38. L. 102.

Marshal of the Soviet Union M.V. Zakharov confuses this story even more. In the book "The General Staff in the Prewar Years," he writes that on June 1, 1939, during a report, the people's commissar of defense had a question about the need to replace N.V. Japanese, included the Mongolian cavalry, mechanized brigades and one rifle division."¹⁰² Further, Zakharov, who was present at the report, writes: "Chief of the General Staff B.M. Shaposhnikov agreed with the proposal of K.E. Voroshilov, and we began to look for a suitable commander. I suggested appointing G.K. Zhukov to this position, who at that time served in the Belarusian Military District as an inspector of a cavalry-mechanized group (in case of war, this group was to be commanded by G.K. Zhukov). The proposal, now supposedly Zakharova, was accepted. It makes no sense to give lengthy evidence that Zhukov, Denisov and Chernyshev arrived at the headquarters of the 57th Special Corps not on the morning of June 5, but much earlier. According to archival documents, on May 30 they sent a report to Moscow about the situation and the actions of the corps.

... Early in the morning of May 27, after aviation training, the consolidated detachment of Colonel Yamagata went on the offensive and broke through the defenses of parts of the 57th corps. A report dated May 30 noted: "... During May 28, there was an exclusively unorganized battle, controlled only by unit commanders ... During May 29, the enemy occupied a height of 2–3 km east of Khalkhin Gol. Parts of the group, reinforced by two battalions of the 9th motorized brigade, attacking in the forehead, tried to capture the heights; by the end of May 29, the units were entrenched on the river, having the main grouping to the west of the Khalkhin-Gol River. As a result of an exceptionally unorganized battle, units during May 28 and 29 suffered approximately losses: 71 killed, 80 wounded, 33 missing.

Among the reasons for the losses and unsatisfactory battle were noted "a tactically illiterate decision and a frivolous attitude of the command and headquarters of the 57th rifle corps to the organization of the battle, the lack of consideration for the maneuverability and tactics of the enemy", the lack of interaction between the I-15 and I-16 aircraft, which were issued into battle "in small groups and at intervals, as a result of which Japanese aircraft destroyed our aircraft" (from May 21 to May 28, the enemy shot down 17 Soviet aircraft in air battles. - V.D.). "...Party political work is not specific, the leadership is insufficient, ignorance of the moods and needs of the personnel ..." ¹⁰³ It is curious that, recalling his first trip directly to the combat area together with the corps commissar, Zhukov writes: "On the way, the commissar spoke in detail about the state of corps, its combat effectiveness, about the headquarters, about individual commanders and political workers. M.S. Nikishev made a very good impression on me. He knew his business, he knew people, their shortcomings and virtues."¹⁰⁴ Perhaps Georgy Konstantinovich did not want in his memoirs

¹⁰² See: Zakharov M.V. General Staff in the prewar years. M., 1989. S. 153

¹⁰³ Cit. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 100–101.

¹⁰⁴ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 242.

offend political workers, and perhaps he was corrected from above, as was done more than once when he was working on his book. The fact that party political work in the corps was unsatisfactory was repeatedly reported in various reports. So, Chernyshev, in his report to the head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army of June 15, assessed the actions of the commissar by no means rosy and emphasized that Nikishev's report of June 13 "in terms of analyzing events and conclusions is biased, it does not show the real picture of the units during the events." The aggravation of the situation on the state border of the Mongolian People's Republic alarmed the Soviet government

in earnest. People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov, in a speech on May 31 at the third session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, stated: "It seems that it is time for anyone to understand that the Soviet government will not tolerate any provocations from the Japanese-Manchurian military units on its borders." The most important thing in the People's Commissar's speech was the warning that, by virtue of the concluded treaty, the Soviet Union would defend the border of the Mongolian People's Republic as resolutely as it would defend its own.

Japan tried to present the matter in such a way that the cause of the hostilities was aggression on the part of the Mongolian People's Republic. The Japanese Telegraph Agency reported in early June: "... The combined Outer Mongolian and Soviet troops tried to surround Nomon-Khan, east of Lake Buir-Nur. However, their attempts were unsuccessful as a result of a successful flank bypass undertaken by the Japanese troops and ended with the displacement of the Soviet and Outer Mongolian troops from the crossing point across the Khalkha border river. The actions of the Japanese-Manchurian troops from 25.5 to 31.5 successfully ended with the expulsion of all troops invading the border. Meanwhile, the failures of our troops continued, and all responsibility for them was

assigned to the command of the 57th corps. "At the headquarters of the corps," it was said in the next report to Voroshilov of the inspection group headed by Zhukov dated June 3, "now only the chief of staff of the corps, comrade. Kushchev and one department of ABT (armored. - V.D.). The rest of the departments don't work well. The individual training of staff commanders and the cohesion of the headquarters as a whole are unsatisfactory, the interaction between the departments of the headquarters is especially poorly established. The direct culprit of the unpreparedness of the headquarters is the command of the corps - they did not comply with your order No. 113 on the preparation of the headquarters ... Feklenko, as a Bolshevik and a good person, and, of course, devoted to the cause of the party, tries a lot, but basically he is not well organized and not purposeful enough. He was not prepared in advance for this operation, and his headquarters was not ready either. We can give a more complete assessment of Feklenko only after a thorough study of him."¹⁰⁵

Serious failures in the fighting forced Voroshilov on June 5 to decide on the transition to defense along the eastern bank of the Khalkhin Gol River. At the same time, it was again emphasized: "We must not start any active actions ourselves without special instructions from Moscow."¹⁰⁶ Clouds finally gathered over N.V. Feklenko's head. Comcor

¹⁰⁵ Cit. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 101–102

¹⁰⁶ RGVA. F. 37 977. Op. 1. D. 46. L. 94.

Ya.V. Smushkevich reported to Moscow: "I came to the conclusion that the command of the corps and personally Feklenko disbanded the units, did not fix the rear at all and had very low discipline. There is no doubt that the command of the corps did not prepare for the war, or prepared poorly. Therefore, with minor events, the command was confused, and this directly affected aviation. Now Zhukov is putting things in order here. In my opinion, it is advisable to leave him at least for a while as a corps commander. On the same day, June 8, Voroshilov informed Smushkevich: "The unpreparedness of parts of the corps, including aviation, the unacceptable confusion of command at all levels, starting with Feklenko, we felt every day. The aviation commanders of the ZabVO with Izotov at the head look even worse. We will replace both of these commanders one of these days.

Thus, the decision to replace the command of the corps matured in Voroshilov on June 8. Fuel was added to the fire by People's Commissar of Internal Affairs L.P. Beria, who on June 9 sent K.E. Voroshilov an excerpt from the report of the head of the special department of the corps Panin: "The order of the People's Commissar of Defense to destroy the enemy was not executed. The actions of the units are disconnected, a powerful fist of destroying the enemy has not been created. The units rush into battle separately without interaction and support from each other, suffer heavy losses ... half of the BT tanks were

disabled, 25% were destroyed, 9 were burned, the motorized mechanized brigade suffered heavy losses of its composition and military equipment, which is largely due to the lack of infantry support. Corps units are currently unable to pursue the enemy and are only slowly pushing him back to the border line."¹⁰⁷

After a trip to the combat area, Zhukov recalls, "we came to the conclusion that it would be impossible to stop the Japanese military adventure with the forces that our 57th special corps had in the MPR, especially if active operations began simultaneously in other areas and from other directions. Returning to the command post and consulting with the command of the corps, we sent a

report to the People's Commissar of Defense. It briefly outlined the action plan of the Soviet-Mongolian troops: to firmly hold the bridgehead on the right bank of Khalkhin Gol and at the same time prepare a counterattack from the depths. The next day a reply was received. The People's Commissar was in complete agreement with our assessment of the situation and the planned actions. On the same day, an order was received from the People's Commissar to release Commander N.V. Feklenko from command of the 57th Special Corps and appoint me commander of this corps."¹⁰⁸

At the same time, the clouds also gathered over the head of the chief of staff of the corps, Kushchev, who fell under the close eye of special authorities even before Zhukov's arrival. During one of the bombings of the command post by Japanese aircraft, communication with the formations was cut off. Kushchev, despite the ongoing bombing, jumped out of hiding to

¹⁰⁷ RGVA. F. 33 987. Op. 3. D. 1181. L. 126–127.

¹⁰⁸ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 242.

see what happened to the communication lines. Soon he received a denunciation that he ran out of hiding in order to cut the telephone wires and leave the building without communication. Zhukov at first tried to protect him, but, feeling the aggravation of relations with the special department, did not persist, hoping to talk about it with Voroshilov after the end of the fighting. Later, an operational map was lost at the headquarters of

the corps. Responsibility for this incident was also assigned to Kushchev. As a result, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Naturally, it was not without political suspicions characteristic of that time. In the camp, the former brigade commander was once again punished for "loss of vigilance": during his duty in the bathhouse, recidivist criminals stole several sets of linen. At the new court session, Alexander Mikhailovich was given another five years.

They returned him to the army at the end of forty-third with the rank of colonel. He ended the war with the rank of Hero of the Soviet Union again under the command of Zhukov and, during the capture of Berlin, was in the position of chief of staff of the 5th shock army of the 1st Belorussian Front. Subsequently, Colonel-General Kushchev worked as a representative of the joint command of the Armed Forces of the states - participants of the Warsaw Pact Organization in Czechoslovakia. The change of command of the 57th Corps took place on 12 June. On the

same day, the People's Commissar demanded that Zhukov take a number of operational measures to destroy the enemy's fighter and bomber aircraft.¹⁰⁹ On June 16, the new corps commander reported to Voroshilov: "In our actions, we are guided only by your

instructions, and without your approval, not a single important decision will be made in life. held". Such an assurance suggests that during this period, Zhukov, like his predecessor, was deprived of the initiative and the ability to independently take urgent measures in accordance with the evolving situation. In addition, Deputy People's Commissar of Defense G.I. Kulik, who was in Mongolia, often intervened in operational orders.

Taking over the corps, Zhukov immediately focused on gathering intelligence. He appreciated the importance of intelligence at the dawn of command activity, put it at the forefront in both training and combat operations, and always openly favored those who served in intelligence. In a cover letter to the developed plan of reconnaissance activities in the Khalkhin Gol area, Georgy Konstantinovich informs the people's commissar: "... Until now, all types and means of reconnaissance have not been linked into a single system, they have worked without interaction, and such types as eavesdropping through the ground have absolutely no applied. Due to the lack of organization in intelligence, the command of the corps did not and does not have complete clarity about the enemy. Due to poor intelligence, the concentration and actions of the enemy were almost always a surprise, which we cannot allow in the future.

... The reconnaissance plan reported for your approval is intended to determine the main goal, objects and tasks of reconnaissance. All this is determined within the limits of the tasks that lie with us and without a deep ground

¹⁰⁹ RGVA. F. 37 977. Op. 1. D. 46. L. 122–123.

wedging into enemy territory ... no further than 10-15 km from the line of our outposts. All this was aimed at knowing better about the enemy and better preparing for the destruction of all the samurai muck ...

If we do not conduct well-organized reconnaissance, especially intelligence, aviation, and capture prisoners, we will not be able to reveal in advance the plan of actions and the concentration of enemy forces.

In the event of a sudden attack by the enemy on our defenses, we can be late with the withdrawal of the main group from the Tamtsak-Bulak area.”¹¹⁰

Analyzing the causes of the first major losses and defeats, Zhukov first of all ordered to use the temporary lull at the front to train the command staff and fighters in close combat. “good command of a grenade, a bayonet, the ability to crawl covertly and burrow into the ground at the slightest stop”, and secondly, he categorically forbade any attacking actions without serious artillery preparation.¹¹¹

But at first there were no noticeable changes in the situation. On June 20, Voroshilov reprimands Zhukov: “According to your reports, it is clear that instead of searching for and destroying aircraft near the border, you are carrying out unnecessary and useless assault raids on unknown objects, individual vehicles and military camps. Such raids on an empty place with a large number of aircraft lead to unnecessary burning of engines and can give completely the opposite of the expected results ... I propose to stop unnecessary assault raids on unknown targets and limit aviation activity to constant surveillance in the band up to 5-10 km from the border exclusively for reconnaissance purposes ” .¹¹² On June 24, an unsuccessful battle took place between the 149th Infantry Regiment and the Japanese in the Depden-Sume area. “The battle, in my opinion,” the head of the brigade of workers of this department, Abramov, reported to the head of the political department of the Red Army on June 26, “is senseless and was the result of

the promiscuity of the regiment commander Major Remizov and the inaction of the military commissar Kabanov, a battle that resulted in 10 people killed, of which 4 people were left on enemy territory, 87 people were wounded and the loss of one BT-5 tank, 4 armored vehicles and 1 truck, of which the tank, 3 armored vehicles and a truck were left on enemy territory. ¹¹³ However, later I.M. Remizov completely rehabilitated himself having shown remarkable commander's ingenuity and heroism, for which he was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Examples

When commanders ^{And} the fighters showed indiscipline and inept actions, they were not isolated. Measures of influence and punishment are the most severe. So, on June 27, a military tribunal sentenced to death the commander of the detachment, Captain M.P. Agafonov, the commander of the platoon, Lieutenant S.N. Dronov and

¹¹⁰ Cited. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 103–104.

¹¹¹ Ibid. pp. 104–105.

¹¹² RGVA. F. 37 977. Op. 1. D. 46. L. 112.

¹¹³ Ibid. D. 51. L. 129.

Red Army soldier D.Ya. Lagutkin. Moving at night, they lost their way and came across a Japanese outpost. All three, after shelling by the enemy, "in a panic fled to the rear." Convicts had the right to apply to higher judicial bodies for a commutation of the sentence. However, Zhukov and Nikishev were of a different opinion. In their appeal to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, to the People's Commissar of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff, they wrote: "In connection with the combat situation and the special danger of this crime, in accordance with Article 408 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the RSFSR, we petition for the non-admission of the cassation complaints of Agafonov, Dronov and Lagutkin and immediate carrying out the sentence."¹¹⁴ Most likely, such a step was taken in order to restore order and strengthen discipline on the basis of the principle "to disdain others". The Japanese command, being impressed by the first successes, came to the

conclusion that it was necessary to put the last point in the dispute over Khalkhin Gol. The commander of the Kwantung Army, General Ueda, approved on June 20 a new offensive plan, which provided for the preparation and conduct of a "rear operation" with the aim of "destroying the army of Outer Mongolia that had crossed the border." The enemy's plan was to use the main forces of the 23rd Infantry Division to bypass the left flank of the Soviet-Mongolian troops, cross the Khalkhin Gol, cut off the escape routes to the west and eliminate the encircled units. An infantry regiment and a detachment of field anti-aircraft artillery were additionally transferred to the Hailar region. In the Khalun-Arshan area, the 1st tank group (tank regiment, tank field detachment, separate regiment of combat artillery, support and maintenance units) was concentrated under the command of Yasuoka, who was appointed commander of the combined detachment. In total, the enemy concentrated more than 10 thousand bayonets, about 100 guns and up to 60 anti-tank guns for the strike. The Japanese command was so confident in the success of the operation that they invited foreign correspondents and military attachés to the combat area to observe the upcoming victorious actions.

Initially, everything went as planned by the enemy. Before dawn on July 3, units of the Japanese troops, who managed to covertly cross Khalkhin Gol at night, attacked units of the 6th Cavalry Division of the MPR, captured Mount Bain-Tsagan and adjacent areas of the area. At the same time, the few forces opposing the enemy - a little more than a thousand bayonets and about 50 guns - were clearly not able to block his path to strike at the flank and rear of the main grouping of our troops.

In the current, truly critical situation, it was necessary to make an extraordinary decision that would prevent the main enemy forces from breaking through to the opposite bank of Khalkhin Gol. In this situation, the corps commander could only count on his reserve: the 11th tank and 7th motorized armored brigades, which numbered up to 150 tanks and over 150 armored vehicles. In addition, he had at his disposal an armored division of the 8th Mongolian cavalry division, equipped with forty-five-millimeter guns.

By order of Zhukov, the reserve was immediately raised on combat alert and began advancing to Mount Bain-Tsagan. 11th tank brigade (brigade commander

¹¹⁴ Ibid. L. 122.

M.P. Yakovlev) received the task, in cooperation with the 24th motorized rifle regiment (Colonel I.I. Fedyuninsky), a reinforced artillery battalion, to attack the enemy on the move and destroy him. The 7th motorized armored brigade (Colonel A.L. Lesovoy) was to strike at the enemy from the south. Zhukov, in a conversation with Simonov, explained his

decision to launch a counterattack by the forces of the mobile reserve: "At Bain-Tsagan, we had such a situation that the infantry fell behind. Remizov's regiment lagged behind. He had one more move to go. And the Japanese have already landed their 107th division on this, on our, coast. The crossing started at 6 pm and ended at 9 am. They moved 21 thousand. Only some of the second echelons still remained on the other side. They dragged the division and organized a double anti-tank defense - passive and active. Firstly, as soon as their infantrymen came to this shore, they immediately dug into their round anti-tank pits. You remember them. And secondly, they dragged with them all their anti-tank artillery, over a hundred guns. There was a threat that they would crush our units on this coast and force us to leave the bridgehead there, beyond Khalkhin Gol. And on him, on this bridgehead, we had all hope. Thinking about the future, this could not be allowed. I decided to attack the Japanese with Yakovlev's tank brigade. I knew that without the support of the infantry, she would suffer heavy losses, but we deliberately went for it."¹¹⁵ Subsequently, General of the Army I.I. Georgy Konstantinovich correctly determined that our main trump card was the armored formations and that only by actively using them, it was possible to defeat the Japanese troops that had crossed over,

preventing them from burrowing into the ground and organizing anti-tank defense.

Zhukov took a huge risk, not only deciding to send the 11th tank brigade into battle, but also leaving artillery on the eastern bank of the river, which supported part of the forces of the second echelon. This caused dissatisfaction with the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Kulik, who demanded that the artillery be withdrawn from the eastern coast so that the enemy would not get it. However, Zhukov firmly stated that he would not leave the infantry without artillery, and managed to defend his point of view before Voroshilov. Having assigned tasks to the reserves, Georgy

Konstantinovich with the operational group immediately left for the command post, located in the area of Mount Bain-Tsagan. The adjutant of the corps commander M.F. Vorotnikov recalled: "G.K. Zhukov placed his command and observation post near the mountain itself, in the area of \u200b\u200bwhich there was already a hot battle. He occupied a small, unreliable dugout of three logs. Before the start of the battle, the commander of the 36th motorized rifle division was in it. A telephone was brought here to communicate with the units fighting on the right bank of Khalkhin Gol. From this dugout, G.K. Zhukov controlled the battle, clearly and decisively reacted to all changes in the combat situation, showing amazing performance.

¹¹⁵ Op. by: Simonov K.M. Notes on the biography of G.K. Zhukov // Military History Journal. 1987. No. 6. S. 49.

¹¹⁶ Fedyuninsky I.I. In the East. M., 1985. S. 84.

Immediately upon arrival at the command and observation post, Zhukov ordered the heavy artillery battalion of the 185th artillery regiment to throw out reconnaissance to Mount Bain-Tsagan and open fire on the enemy. A powerful blow to the mountain was dealt by artillery located across the river. At the same time, the entire aviation of the corps was raised into the air on alarm. Decisiveness, Suvorov's speed and onslaught.

Events by military standards developed at lightning speed. At 7 o'clock in the morning on July 3, the first groups of bomber and fighter aircraft launched air strikes against enemy ground units and the crossing over Khalkhin Gol. Artillery also kept the enemy crossing under continuous fire. At about 9 o'clock, the advanced units of the vanguard battalion of the 11th tank brigade began to approach.

Together with brigade commander Yakovlev, it was decided to call in all aviation, speed up the movement of tanks and artillery, and attack the enemy no later than 10 hours and 45 minutes. "At

10 hours and 45 minutes," recalled Georgy Konstantinovich, "the main forces of the 11th Tank Brigade turned around and attacked the Japanese troops on the move ... The battle continued day and night on July 4th. Only by 3 o'clock in the morning on July 5, the enemy's resistance was finally broken, and the Japanese troops began to hastily retreat to the crossing. But the crossing was blown up by their own sappers, who feared a breakthrough of our tanks. Japanese officers threw themselves in full gear directly into the water and immediately drowned, literally in front of our tankers.

The remnants of the Japanese troops that captured the Bain-Tsagan mountain were completely destroyed on the eastern slopes of the mountain in the area of the fall of the Khalkhin-Gol River. Thousands of corpses, a mass of dead horses, a multitude of crushed and broken guns, mortars, machine guns, and vehicles littered the mountain of Bain-Tsa-gan."¹¹⁷ Let us cite

evidence from the enemy's side as well. "Through the river Khalhu crossed at about 5 o'clock, - noted in his diary one of the participants in those events Nakamura from the 1st battalion of the 71st regiment of the 23rd infantry division. - Thanks to the good crossings made by our sappers, we quickly crossed the river. Khalkha, without engaging in battle with the enemy ... Our reserve units, moving in loose formation and covering the offensive of the main units, collided with more than ten enemy tanks, almost all of them were destroyed. The second time the reserve units were attacked by ten enemy tanks, of which 6-7 tanks were destroyed. The third attack happened just at the time of the big halt. Several dozen enemy tanks suddenly attacked our units. We had a strange confusion - the horses neighed and ran away, dragging the limbers of the guns behind them, the motor vehicles rushed in all directions. However, this time about 20 enemy tanks were also destroyed... During this battle, two of our aircraft were shot down in the air. As soon as the battle with tanks ended, intensive shelling of enemy artillery began again. The entire staff lost heart. The shells fell very thickly and destroyed everything in their path..."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 246-247.

¹¹⁸ Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 109.

During the battle, called the "Bain-Tsagan battle", the Japanese lost all tanks, a significant part of the artillery, 45 aircraft and about 10 thousand people.

The losses of the 11th tank brigade were also great: almost half of the personnel were killed and wounded. Sacrifices on the altar of victory. How many more will have to be brought in the upcoming battles ...

The enemy clearly did not want to accept defeat. On July 7-8, he made an attempt to take revenge, but, having lost more than five thousand people, he abandoned his idea. Lieutenant General Kamatsubara was forced to admit: "... Despite the fact that the enemy was rebuffed along the entire bank of the Khalkhin Gol River, nevertheless, based on the general situation, we were forced to retreat to our previous position a second time."

The withdrawal of Japanese troops inspired Zhukov to take more decisive action. "The active units of the corps feel tired from sleepless nights and continuous battles from July 2 to 8," he reported on July 8 to Voroshilov, "but they are full of determination and readiness to destroy the samurai bastard ..."119

To destroy the "samurai bastards" a strike task force was formed consisting of two tank, three motorized armored brigades and a rifle division. She received the task of inflicting a "short blow on the enemy with the aim of defeating", "taking the main forces of their former defensive positions and reaching the state border with advanced units." One of the regiments of the 82nd Infantry Division was to "deal a decisive blow in the direction: the northern bank of the Khailastyn-Gol River and further to the north-west and reach the former defensive positions, posting a forward detachment on the state border." To the left, in the same direction, the 149th Rifle Regiment was to advance. The rest of the corps was ordered to actively tie down the enemy and thereby ensure the offensive of the shock group. Parts of the 11th tank brigade were to take their starting position on the sandy puffs 6 kilometers east of the Khalkhin-Gol River and defeat the enemy, his fire system and the nearest reserves. The offensive was to be preceded by artillery and aviation preparation. However, the offensive of the 57th Special Rifle Corps, undertaken on July 9, as well as its subsequent actions, was not successful - after the "Bain-Tsagan Battle" Zhukov clearly overestimated the condition and mood of his units. The Japanese seized the initiative again, inflicting sensitive blows on the Soviet troops, who from July 8 to 12

lost about 3 thousand people killed, wounded and missing. Heavy losses had a negative impact on the morale of the Red Army. It sometimes came to direct disobedience to the commanders. So, on the night of July 11-12, two battalions of the 603rd regiment of the 82nd rifle division left their positions twice without an order. The regiment even tried to rebel. Things were no better in other parts of the division. Therefore, Zhukov was forced to replace in this division the commanders of regiments, battalions, companies and even platoons, recently called up from the reserve, with commanders from the 36th Motorized Rifle Division, which had proven itself in previous battles.

119 Ibid. pp. 110-111.

The corps commander did not limit himself only to replacing commanders, but also took tougher measures to restore order among the troops. On July 11, he signed an order stating:

“§ 1. For the inactivity shown in organizing the crossing, for the inactivity in organizing command and control for the battle - to the regiment commander comrade Stepanov, the military commissar comrade Musin, the chief of staff comrade Nerot - I reprimand and warn that if the regiment is not organized, if the command and headquarters will be inactive, I will raise the question before the People's Commissar of Defense about bringing the military tribunal to trial. § 2. Despite a number of warnings about the careful use of ammunition, the criminal firing of ammunition continues as before, especially artillery, which aimlessly and at unimportant

targets shoots thousands of shells, forgetting its duty to economically wage war and accumulate shells for a decisive blow. under personal responsibility

commanders, commissars, political workers - to stop conducting aimless and unorganized fire, shooting at unimportant and small targets with rifle and machine-gun fire and small-caliber artillery, allowing the enemy to close range, for a sure shot. In the event that large enemy units appeared in front of the front, organize concentrated fire of all types of weapons so that the enemy would certainly be destroyed by the fire system.”¹²⁰ Some fighters were tried by a military tribunal. Among them are the Red Army soldiers Nikitin and Maltsev, who on July 9 “due to cowardice, deliberately, in order to evade the military duties of military service in a combat situation,

lightly wounded themselves in the left hand with a rifle shot. Moreover, Nikitin, having gone to the rear after self-injury, threw a rifle, 120 pieces of live ammunition and all his uniforms before crossing the river. On July 13, both Red Army soldiers were sentenced by a military tribunal to capital punishment - execution by firing squad with confiscation of all their personal property.

"Tov. Red Army soldiers, commanders and political workers of formations and units of the corps! - noted in Zhukov's order for the corps dated July 13. “We, the sons of the glorious 170 million people, have been given the high honor of defending the laboring masses of the MPR from despicable invaders, we have been entrusted with the honorable task of defeating the samurai who trample on the peaceful labor of the free people of the MPR. I call you to courage, courage, boldness, bravery and heroism. Death to contemptible cowards and traitors! The harsh hand of revolutionary law will continue to ruthlessly sweep away cowards and traitors from the face of the earth. Honor and glory to the brave and courageous soldiers of our glorious Red Army!

The order is to be brought to every soldier.”¹²¹

Commander-in-chief of the first rank Kulik repeatedly reported that in the units of the 57th Special Rifle Corps not everything was going well. A particularly difficult situation developed on July 12,

¹²⁰ Ibid. S. 112.

¹²¹ Ibid. pp. 113–114.

when the commander of the 11th tank brigade commander M.P. Yakovlev died during the organization of the defeat of the enemy group that had broken through. "... The 36th rifle division suffered significant losses," wrote Kulik, "the 11th tank brigade remained only as part of one battalion, the armored brigades each have one rifle company, 30–40 armored vehicles, the 3rd (correctly 603rd. — V.D.) the rifle regiment and the 5th brigade are unstable and are absolutely not knocked together and not trained. In addition, from the conduct of 12-day battles, the personnel units were badly battered and required replenishment. The report also emphasized: "Command control in battle by the headquarters of battalions and regiments is weak, in companies it is even worse. The commanders and staffs are not able to organize interaction on the scale of a battalion and a regiment. Parts are completely unprepared for night operations. Kulik believed that "July 12 was a critical day and could have ended for us with the loss of equipment, artillery, and also a significant part of the personnel, if the enemy repeated the counterattack, because we occupied a ring-shaped front, clinging to the western slopes of the hillocks, and the enemy's attack on the crossing was threatened with complete capture and defeat of our forces, since there were no reserves to parry the blow."¹²²

Moscow was also dissatisfied with the actions of the corps. Voroshilov telegraphed Zhukov on July 12: "I consider your opinion about the position of the enemy at the front to be correct. From this you need to draw the right conclusion for yourself. The conclusion is as follows:

First. The Japanese in battle are more organized and tactically more competent than you. Being battered, having suffered significant losses, they, hiding behind strong barriers dug in at convenient positions, pulled the main forces to the border to rest and put in order. Second. The enemy puts forward sniper shooters and sniper guns, which do us great harm. Third. The Japanese, with their continuous small attacks during the day and

exhaust our troops at night.

Fourth. The Japanese hold the initiative in their hands and use it skillfully. The actions of the corps in recent days have been wrong ... You do not care about the rest of people, and this is one of the main factors for successful operations at the front. The rested enemy attacked again on the night of July 7-8, and you had to repulse the enemy at the main line of defense. Instead, on July 9 you went on the general offensive, despite my warning not to do so. I also warned you not to bring the lead regiment of the 82nd Infantry Division into battle right from the march; you did not do this either, although you agreed with my instructions. I understand your desire to wrest the initiative from the enemy, but the desire to "go on the attack and destroy the enemy," as you often write about, does not solve the matter.

I consider it unacceptably frivolous to use our tanks. Tanks are a powerful tool when used correctly and easy prey if they are thrown by companies and battalions on an entrenched

¹²² Ibid. S. 111.

enemy, which you have done repeatedly.

We do not know how to combine defense and short strikes on the enemy's weak points. It is completely unknown what our anti-tank artillery is doing, which is capable of not only destructively hitting tanks, armored vehicles, but also enemy sniper nests. You complain about the unpreparedness of the 5th motorized

mechanized brigade and the head regiment of the 82nd rifle division, but you didn't do anything to gradually bring them into battle, "fire", let the command staff and soldiers "smell" the battle, the situation. You threw these units along with others into the attack, made a bet on them and wanted to "destroy" the enemy with their help.

You complain that you do not sleep for the seventh day. This is also one of the elements of disorganization and misunderstanding of the situation. You are obliged to sleep as much and as much as and when necessary and possible, otherwise you will leave the troops without command.

We are suffering huge losses in men and materiel not so much because of the superiority of the enemy forces and his "valor", but because all of you, commanders and commissars, consider only desire and impulse to defeat the enemy. This is far from enough, although it is important. Requires endurance, organization, thoughtful action. We make little use of our artillery. We spend a lot of shells,

and there is little combat effect from this.

There is almost no interaction between the branches of the armed forces, and the work of aviation is especially weakly linked with ground troops. Agree on measures and immediate tactical tasks with Comrade Kulik ... I warn you again that every unit, including personnel, takes some time to get used to the combat situation. The command must be able to bring a new unit into battle, make it feel that it can beat the enemy.

... The Japanese climb out of their skin to show their strength. We must be smarter than them and calmer. Be less nervous, do not rush to destroy the enemy with "one blow", and we will defeat the enemy with less expenditure of our blood."¹²³

The fact that the interaction of the military branches was poorly organized was also known to the People's Commissar of Defense from those who paid with their blood for the mistakes of commanders. In confirmation, we quote from a letter to K.E. Voroshilov of the Red Army soldiers of the 175th artillery regiment of Kosterin, Pervukhin, Glekin: "The front is not covered by our aviation, due to which the enemy's aviation really delays all the activities of our troops, thereby causing great losses on our side. Due to the lack of aviation, a lot of tanks died, which had not yet had time to enter the battle ... From the first days of the open battles to the present, our infantry has suffered very heavy losses, and in recent days the situation with the delivery of ammunition and fuel has been deteriorating. ¹²⁴ Meanwhile, the Chief Military Officer Council of the Red Army, trying to improve the command and control of the troops of the Far Eastern region, decides
on

¹²³ Ibid. pp. 114–118.

¹²⁴ RGVA. F. 33 987. Op. 3. D. 1181. L. 176.

the formation in Chita of a new leading military body - the front group. It was headed by the commander of the 2nd rank G.M. combat area, in order to get acquainted with the current situation on the spot. Having discovered large concentrations of enemy forces, on July 13 he reported to the People's Commissariat of Defense: "Apparently,

the enemy, shielded by guards and probing our weak points with intelligence, is preparing a strong blow in the coming days in order to throw our units into the river." At the same time, Stern suggested to Kulik: "... until new units come up and the weak ones pull up, reduce the number of our units on the eastern coast, but firmly occupy two small bridgeheads that provide crossings, which will be used later to go on the offensive." It was necessary to assess the current situation and inform the People's Commissar of Defense or make a decision yourself. Kulik, without waiting for instructions from above, ordered Zhukov on the night of July 13 to withdraw the main forces, equipment, artillery to the western bank of the Khalkhin Gol River to put in order, leaving one reinforced battalion on the opposite side to defend the crossings. In the current situation, such a decision seemed the most correct, and Zhukov immediately gave the appropriate order for the corps. But in Moscow they

thought differently. On the afternoon of July 14, Shaposhnikov urgently summoned Zhukov to a direct wire and demanded in a harsh manner to restore the position of the units. Following this, Zhukov received an order from the people's commissar:

"I cancel your order to withdraw the main forces from the eastern bank of Khalkhin Gol to the western one, as incorrect. I order immediately to restore the previous situation, that is, to reoccupy with the main forces the points that were weakened by the withdrawal of most of the troops.

Organize the tidying up and rest of the troops on the eastern shore, since the enemy is not active. The eastern coast must be kept by us under all circumstances. Prepare with this indispensable condition in mind."¹²⁶

Kulik's intercession did not help either, who was "reprimanded for arbitrariness, expressed in giving, without the knowledge and sanction of the People's Commissariat of Defense, a directive to the command of the 57th Rifle Corps on the withdrawal of the main forces from the eastern bank of the Khalkhin Gol River." Voroshilov believed that only the unjustified withdrawal of our troops provoked the Japanese to new, albeit weak, active actions. Therefore, on behalf of the Main Military Council, he ordered Kulik "to continue not to interfere in the operational affairs of the corps, leaving the corps command and comrade to do this. Stern...".

Was there a sharp

¹²⁵ RGVA. F. 37 977. Op. 1. D. 28. L. 17-21.

¹²⁶ Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 119.

necessity? Now it is difficult to judge this. For example, researcher V.G. Krasnov believes that "most likely not: as a result of 12-day battles, the Japanese lost over 15 thousand people and were not ready for immediate effective response. But the demoralized 603rd regiment of the 82nd rifle division left on the eastern bank of Khalkhin Gol to guard the crossing, it was enough for the Japanese to mark the offensive with the forces of only one company, in a panic began to retreat to the crossing, without even accepting a battle. The enemy used this and tried to seize the crossing on the shoulders of the fleeing regiment. Despite the opposition of the guards, the soldiers of the regiment broke through the bridge, some of them threw down their weapons and crossed the river by swimming. Zhukov managed to stop the fugitives, repulse the enemy and restore the situation east of the Khalkhin Gol River. As a result of the panic, 856 people remained in the regiment, 4 heavy and 3 light machine guns. On July 15, two vehicles of abandoned weapons were collected."¹²⁷ But this, according to Krasnov, might not have happened if Zhukov, on Kulik's order, had not withdrawn the main body of the corps to the western coast of Khalkhin Gol. One obvious circumstance should be noted here: Zhukov had a very difficult time, there is no doubt about it. The complexity of his position was not only a consequence of the scale of the military conflict and the far

from ideal condition of the units, but also the result of an extremely cumbersome command and control scheme in the combat area. The corps commander had to simultaneously carry out the orders and instructions of the People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov, his deputy Kulik and the commander of the front group Stern, constantly send reports to all of them. In many cases, the current situation fettered Zhukov's initiative, but sometimes it also prevented possible mistakes.

At the same time, we will pay tribute to both Kulik and Stern, and other commanders. The study of archival documents shows that Deputy People's Commissar of Defense G.I. Kulik, who arrived at Khalkhin Gol mainly with inspector functions, competently analyzed the combat activities of rifle, tank and armored formations and units, gave an objective assessment of the actions of aviation and command and control bodies, put forward specific and well-reasoned proposals for improving the combat training of troops and their logistics, he himself actively participated in the practical implementation of these measures. GM Stern approached the solution of complex problems with exceptional responsibility. By that time, he was not yet 39 years old, of which he gave twenty to serve in the Red Army, fought near

Perekop and with the Basmachi in Central Asia. In 1926, Stern graduated from the courses of the highest command staff, three years later - the Military Academy. M.V. Frunze, served in the People's Commissariat of Defense, fought in Spain under the pseudonym "General Grigorovich", where he was the chief military adviser to the command of the Republican army. In May 1938, he was appointed chief of staff of the Far Eastern Front. In this position, together with V.K. Blucher, he led the defeat of the Japanese troops near Lake Khasan.

On July 19, the Main Military Council of the Red Army decided "in order to strengthen the leadership of the troops stationed on the territory of the MPR,

¹²⁷ Ibid. pp. 120–121.

reorganize the management of the 57th special corps into the management of the army group with subordination to the commander of the front group. This new formation was given the name "1st Army Group", commanded by G.K. Zhukov. This is a very important point, since the authors of many works

on Zhukov do not take this fact into account and sometimes speak disparagingly about Stern and Kulik, as if they were doing nothing but harming him.

Zhukov himself drew the appropriate conclusions from the experience of the heavy July battles. The troops were put in order, their material and logistical support was improved, military discipline was strengthened, and the training of commanders and Red Army men was improved. One of his orders of those days is characteristic: "The entire junior

command staff, who showed cowardice in battle, the inability to command their fighters, succumbing to panic and provocation, demote the commanders of units and formations to the rank and file, replacing them with the best, distinguished, brave, determined fighters ... Everyone withdrawn to the reserve units to immediately begin training sessions. First of all, use the experience of combat operations at the front. All tactical exercises should be built taking into account combat experience. The technique of running and crawling, accumulating for an attack, knowledge and ability to use hand grenades and a quick and decisive attack with a powerful Red Army cheer. View and debug weapons, check for cleaning supplies. Conduct classes, starting before dawn, ending at 7-8 in the morning and in the evening from 20.00 to 22.00. Sleep during the day, do not hang out in vain in the fields and do not unmask the location of your units. A particularly thorough analysis of the hostilities should be carried out by the commanders of formations and units with middle and senior command personnel, emphasizing our weaknesses, disorganization, fussiness, indiscretion, insufficient stamina and courage. At the same time, to show the command staff that the enemy has many weaknesses, that he is very afraid of short close combat with a hand grenade and a bayonet, as a rule, he cannot withstand a bayonet strike. To teach the commanding staff to navigate the terrain with a map, a compass and without them ...

"129

All issues had to be resolved in difficult conditions, as the enemy did not stop his attempts to restore the lost position. So, on the morning of July 23, units of the 23rd Infantry Division and three cavalry regiments, supported by artillery fire and air strikes, attacked the left flank of the 1st Army Group. The enemy managed to wedge into the location of the 149th motorized rifle regiment and the rifle and machine gun battalion of the 11th tank brigade. However, Zhukov brought the reserves of the 36th motorized rifle and 82nd rifle divisions into battle and liquidated the breakthrough. Highly appreciating the actions of the personnel to disrupt the next offensive of the Japanese troops, in an order dated

July 30, Zhukov again shows concern about the moral and political situation in a number of

128 See: Military Historical Journal. 1979. No. 8. S. 49.

129 Cit. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 124.

units and divisions:

"... Unfortunately, among us there were individual fighters, commanders and even political workers who did not appreciate the whole situation, give in to individual combat difficulties and, instead of mobilizing the entire personnel for Bolshevik stubbornness, they themselves showed cowardice and sometimes themselves were carriers of various chatter and disbelief in their powerful forces. What good is such chatter of the commissar of the 8th motorized

armored brigade - regimental commissar Kozlov, who among the command staff said: "The command of the group does not give us replenishment, the people at the front are tired, they have been without sleep for more than 10 days. How long this situation will last, no one from the command of the group says. This is not a war, but some kind of confusion. At least we were replaced from here." The mood of the commander of the 8th motorized armored brigade, Colonel

Mishulin, is no better. Or another, even worse example of the chatter of the commissar

of the 5th rifle machine gun brigade Zhukov, who in the first days of the fighting did not provide a stubborn defense of the site, his commander Fedorkov shamefully left the brigade and fled from the battlefield, and now he declares: "I, as a communist, it cannot be imagined that our Red Army should wage war in such a disgraceful manner. There is complete confusion in our artillery, confusion with fire. Replenishment is not given to us." He is echoed by the commissar of the PTD (anti-tank division. - V.D.) 5th

rifle-machine-gun brigade senior political instructor Kaidash ... "130

The order defines specific measures to strengthen party political work. At the same time, it shows how much work it took to overcome the demoralizing impact on people of the specifics of a military conflict in the conditions of remoteness of the combat area. The Japanese command, convinced of the futility of their offensive efforts, decided at

the end of July to go on the defensive on the lines they occupied, to put their personnel and materiel in order in order to prepare for the "general offensive" scheduled for the end of August. By August 10, from among the units and formations that arrived to reinforce, the 6th Army was formed, numbering 55 thousand people, 500 guns, 182 tanks, about 1300 machine guns and over 300 aircraft. Addressing the personnel, its commander O. Rippo urged: "... The officers and soldiers of our army in this unprecedentedly difficult moment for us must understand and understand well the importance of the duties entrusted to them and, sparing no one's strength, fulfill the imperial decree day and night tempering our spirit, overcoming incalculable difficulties, ensure the unity of our army and its training, boldly move forward to resolve this conflict, and be fully prepared for future operations. Both sides prepared for a decisive battle. On July 25, People's Commissar of Defense Voroshilov demanded that Stern "... strengthen our troops on the right bank with new units sufficient to overcome enemy forces and advance to the border.

... Do not limit yourself to frontal attacks, but systematically go to

bypassing the right and left flanks of the enemy, for which there are sufficient fists on the flanks with armored units. ... Immediately move field airfields to the left bank of Khalkhin Gol and set up ambushes of fighters directly near the left bank of Khalkhin Gol ... "131

In accordance with this, on July 27, Stern orders Zhukov: to organize reconnaissance searches to clarify the enemy's forces against the 1st Army Group, to conduct aerial photography of the Japanese defenses east of Khalkhin Gol and to make a detailed diagram of the enemy's positions and the location of his firepower, finish by On July 30, reconnaissance of the area, and by July 31, to prepare specific considerations for the defeat of the Japanese grouping in the area of the Khalkhin Gol River. 20 days were allotted for preparation for the operation. The following tasks were set for the next few days: to firmly defend the occupied line on the eastern bank of Khalkhin Gol; with well-prepared night strikes or short attacks after an artillery fire raid, improve the situation in the sector of the 603rd Infantry Regiment and against the central crossing; exhaust the enemy with raids by small groups of bombers and fighters; place 50 mock-up aircraft on false platforms; pay special attention to the training of newly arriving troops and replenishment.

One of the points of the order was to have advanced airfields ready for basing fighters by July 28. It is interesting in that it does not confirm the version expressed by V.G. Krasnov in the book "Unknown Zhukov": Zhukov, together with Smushkevich, decided to do something that "was not provided for by military theory, did not occur in combat practice - to single out a group from each aviation regiment aircraft and keep it ready near the front at field airfields (they were then called "jump airfields"). Such airfields were quickly built, and the air situation in the Khalkhin Gol region immediately changed for the better, and the losses of Japanese aviation increased. Then, during the Great Patriotic War, such basing of fighter aircraft became the rule, and the airfields were called "advanced" ones. The orders of Voroshilov and Stern call into question the categoricalness with which the names of the discoverers in this area are named.

Zhukov's personality is so unique, and his military talent and merits are so great that they do not need either artificial exaltation or retouching. All the more clumsy are attempts to create an idol out of him, eclipsing the merits of his comrades-in-arms.

M.A. Gareev in his book "Marshal Zhukov. The greatness and uniqueness of military leadership" writes: "The commander of the 1st Army Group under these conditions is no longer going to defend himself and wait for the enemy to go on the offensive again. He speeds up the preparation of his troops in every possible way in order to preempt the enemy in going over to the offensive. The Japanese planned to go on the offensive on August 24, Zhukov launched his offensive on August 20. He decided to pin down the enemy from the front with rifle formations and strikes from flank, mostly mobile armored forces, to surround and destroy the Japanese grouping on the eastern bank of the river. Khalkhin Gol.

From this we can draw one conclusion: all the preparation and planning of the August operation was carried out only by Zhukov. But then what about Voroshilov's instructions, which he gave to Stern on August 1: "... Apparently, the point is that we will be forced to launch an attack on the enemy in all sectors of the Manchurian border." And further, the people's commissar demands that all VNOS posts and all aviation of the army (district) be brought to full combat readiness, that fighter units be relocated to operational airfields; to garrison all advanced military installations in fortified areas and put them on combat readiness; all troops "to be ready, by order of the high command, to go on the offensive in all sectors of the Manchurian border."

By August 10, Stern had a specific plan to defeat the enemy. It provided for the main attack on the right flank of the 1st Army Group and the auxiliary attack on its left flank. This proposal was supported by the People's Commissar of Defense. At the same time, Voroshilov limited the depth of the strike, ordering not to cross the border, but to gain a foothold on the command heights, not reaching it 4-5 kilometers. Before the start of the operation, it was instructed to carry out a preliminary destruction by artillery fire and aviation of enemy firing points and manpower in order to avoid unnecessary losses during the attack. Stern was forbidden to bring troops of the 1st and 2nd armies to the border and to conduct group air raids of these armies in the border area.¹³²

The success of the upcoming operation largely depended on the replenishment of the troops, their logistics and logistics. The losses of the 1st Army Group (before that - the 57th Special Rifle Corps) for the period from May 16 to July 25 amounted to 5010 people. During this time, almost all ammunition, food supplies, and fuel were used up. The difficulty, as already noted, was that the supply of reinforcements and everything necessary was carried out in off-road conditions and the great remoteness of the combat area from the railway. And at the same time, within a month, about 50 thousand tons of various cargoes and up to 18 thousand people were delivered by cars to a distance of about 750 kilometers. To reinforce the 1st Army Group, the 6th Tank Brigade, units of the 57th and 65th Rifle Divisions, an anti-aircraft regiment, an airborne brigade, and other formations, units and subunits for various purposes were deployed.

It should be noted here that in various publications, data on the forces and means of the parties differ significantly. Let's not bore ourselves with examples - more importantly, how the headquarters of the 1st Army Group assessed the combat and numerical strength of the enemy and its troops, since they took this data into account when preparing and planning the operation. According to him, the Japanese and Manchu troops numbered 49.6 thousand people (according to the enemy - 58 thousand only Japanese soldiers and officers), 186 guns and 20 mortars, 110 anti-tank guns, 130 tanks, 30 armored vehicles and 448 aircraft. These forces occupied the dominating hillocks along the line 15 kilometers southeast of Nomon-Khan-Burd-Obo, Nuren-Obo, sandy hillocks up to Mount Bain-Tsagan. The total length of the defense front, which was well prepared in engineering terms, especially in the center of the battle formation,

¹³² Ibid. L. 25.

was 40 kilometers. Dugouts, communication passages, fox holes, shelters for cars and slots for horses, wire fences were equipped here. In front of the line of defense were parts of the cover, and in the depths - a strong reserve (tank brigade). Up to 5 regiments of the Bargut cavalry were located on the flanks. In addition, during the fighting, the Japanese command deployed a guard battalion from Hailar, a guard detachment from Changchun and an infantry detachment to Khalkhin Gol.

The composition and strength of the 1st Army Group was determined by its headquarters as follows: 36th motorized rifle (two regiments), 82nd and 57th rifle divisions, 11th and 6th tank brigades, 7th, 8th and 9th motorized armored brigades, 4 artillery battalions of the RGK. The 36th motorized rifle and 82nd rifle divisions and the 9th motorized armored brigade were on the defensive 1.5–3 kilometers east of the Khalkhin Gol River. In total, the Soviet-Mongolian troops numbered 59 thousand people, 373 artillery guns, 194 anti-tank guns, 396 tanks, 300 armored vehicles, 594 aircraft (100 of them with minor breakdowns).¹³³ Our units outnumbered the enemy in tanks by 3 times, in aircraft - 1.3 times, artillery guns - 2 times.

... In the notes of the writer Konstantin Simonov about the Khalkhingol events there are the following lines: "Somehow, during one of my trips to Hamar Daba, I had to face for the first time in a military environment the same disputes about talents and abilities, and, moreover, almost in the same irreconcilable the form in which they occur among the writer brothers ... I sat in one of the headquarters tents and talked with the cavalry commanders. One of them, a colonel who served with Zhukov almost from the cavalry, said with conviction and sharply that the whole plan for encircling the Japanese was Zhukov's plan, that Zhukov himself compiled and proposed it, and Stern had nothing to do with this plan, that Zhukov talent, and Stern is nothing special, and that this is exactly the case, because - he knows this for sure - no one except Zhukov had anything to do with this plan.

The conversation was not personal. If it were so, it would not be worth mentioning it. There was in the colonel's words the same confidence and categoricalness that often appeared in our own conversations, when we, young pupils of the Literary Institute, categorically insisting on the talents of our favorite poets and teachers, debunked everyone else along the way. ¹³⁴ In the editorial "Courage and Heroism " , published on August 30, 1939 in the newspaper

Krasnaya Zvezda, it was noted: "The name of the commander of the 2nd rank G.M. Stern deservedly flaunts in the list of Heroes of the Soviet Union. An outstanding military leader, a talented student of Comrade. Voroshilov, the leader of the battles near Lake Khasan, Grigory Mikhailovich Stern, brilliantly completed the combat mission. One of the remarkable military leaders of our party, a member of its Central Committee - he is an example of a courageous Bolshevik, a combat leader of the troops. Without trial or investigation, Stern was shot in October 1941.

¹³³ See: Khalkhin-Gol: Fifty years later. S. 71.

¹³⁴ Op. by: Simonov K.M. Notes on the biography of G.K. Zhukov // Military History Journal. 1987. No. 6. S. 47.

together with other military leaders, including participants in the Khalkhingol events. Time passed, and Stern was forgotten. They forgot, although his contribution to achieving victory is undeniable. In many books dedicated to Khalkhin

Gol, the role of the chief of staff of the 1st Army Group, brigade commander M.A. Bogdanov, is forgotten. It's a pity. After all, it was on him that Zhukov relied during the preparation of the operation, under his leadership the headquarters developed important documents that largely contributed to the successful conduct of the offensive. For example, the "Plan of preparatory measures" included a detailed description of the order of concentration of troops, their crossing, actions in the initial position, the sequence of artillery preparation and attack, air defense measures, camouflage of the operation and misleading the enemy, the order of rear, logistical and sanitary provision of troops, organization and maintenance of sustainable management. At the direction of the group headquarters, tables of troop concentration and rear establishments, planned crossing tables, plans for the interaction of troops in battle, reconnaissance, disinformation and disorientation of the enemy, combat orders and orders, instructions for communications and covert command and control of troops, memos to soldiers in defense were prepared in units and formations. and offensive. In addition, the Air Force Headquarters of the 1st Army Group developed the "Air Force Combat Operations Plan in the Preparatory Period" and the "Planned Table of Combat Operations of the Air Force Units of the 1st Army Group on August 20, 1939", and the political department of the 1st Army Group developed the "Plan for political support for the offensive. The headquarters of the group compiled a "Memo to the fighter of the Red Army on actions in the offensive", which aimed the fighters "for the complete and merciless destruction of the arrogant Japanese

invaders."

All these documents are very interesting in content and are characterized by a creative approach to the solution of such a complex task as the preparation and conduct of an offensive operation in those difficult conditions, which we have already spoken about more than once.

According to Zhukov's plan, reflected in the "Plan of preparatory measures", the concentration of units in the starting position for the crossing was envisaged by echelons at night on August 16-17. With the occupation of the starting position, the troops had to dig in and disguise themselves. By 10 p.m. on August 17, bridge crossings were to be prepared. The beginning of the crossing of tanks across the fords was determined at 21:00, and the infantry across the bridges - at 22:00. The beginning of artillery preparation was planned for 4 hours 30 minutes on August 20, lasting 3 hours, after which the infantry was supposed to go on the attack. Aviation had to strike from 05:45 to 06:15 to deliver the first strike on enemy positions and firing points, from 08:45 to 09:15 - a second raid, and from 09:30 to be in readiness for action against enemy reserves. . Three groups of troops were created for the operation: Southern (commander - Colonel M.I. Potapov), Northern (commander - Colonel I.V. Shevnikov) and Central (commander - Colonel D.E. Petrov). In the reserve of the commander of the 1st Army Group were the 212th airborne and 9th

motorized armored brigades, a tank battalion of the 6th tank brigade and the MNRA armored brigade.

It was planned to apply by the forces of the Southern and Northern groups

troops of two enveloping strikes from the flanks with the aim of encircling and destroying the Japanese troops and preventing their withdrawal to Manchuria. The central group was to pin down the enemy from the front and assist its main forces in its defeat.

The southern group was to strike with its right flank in the direction of Nomon-Khan-Burd-Obo, encircle and defeat the enemy's southern group, and further capture the heights on the southern bank of the Khailastyn-Gol River. The central group had the task of assisting the southern group and reaching the southern bank of the Khailastyn-Gol river. The northern group was to strike with its left flank in the direction of Nomon-Khan-Burd-Obo and, together with the Southern group, encircle and destroy the enemy's northern grouping. Two Mongol cavalry divisions, not complete in number, but satisfactory in terms of combat capability, were assigned the task of actively covering the flanks of the 1st Army Group. The group's reserve was located 8 kilometers southwest of Mount Khamar-Daba and was preparing to build on the success of the Southern or Northern groups. "The decisive factor in the success of the upcoming operation," testifies G.K. Zhukov, "we considered operational-tactical surprise, which would have to put the enemy in

such a position that he could not resist our annihilating strike and take a counter-manoeuve. Particularly taken into account was the fact that the Japanese side, lacking good tank formations and motorized troops, would not be able to quickly transfer its units from secondary sectors and from the depths against our strike groups operating on the flanks of the enemy's defenses in order to encircle the 6th Japanese Army. 135 Zhukov paid special attention to conducting large-scale disinformation of the enemy. On the evening of August 12, the construction of trenches and positions began in the areas of units and formations of the first echelon, and an order was issued "every night to carry out work to strengthen and set up wire fences, creating a complete sound impression

of driving stakes and other defensive work." On August 13, memos were distributed to all soldiers in the defense, and a false telegram was given from the area of the 36th motorized rifle division, containing information about the preparation of defensive work. At the same time, it was ordered from 2 am to 2 am 45 minutes from August 14 to 17 to transmit false reports on the work done on the engineering equipment of the area. Until August 15, it was forbidden to carry out any concentrations on the flanks. The advance of troops was required to be carried out only at night to the sound of engines. In order to accustom the enemy "to the noise of engines and caterpillar noise, continue in the center, south of Mount Khamar-Daba, the area of \u200b\u200bthe central crossing, demonstrative movements of tanks and tractors until 16.8 inclusive." At the same time, false bridges were being built in the sectors of the 36th and 82nd divisions. The plan of operation contained comprehensive instructions on the logistics and logistics of the troops. By the beginning of the operation, the necessary reserves had been created in the combat area: for ground troops - up to 6 ammunition and up to 6 fuel stations; For

aviation - at least 5 refueling stations for bombers and 12-15 refueling stations for fighters. In Tamtsak-Bulak, additional places for 1,000 beds were deployed to receive the wounded, as well as another evacuation hospital.

In order to ensure stable command and control of troops, the communication of the command post of the 1st Army Group with the commanders of formations was carried out by a double wire system. The political

department of the group published about 5 million leaflets of appeals to the enemy troops in Japanese, Mongolian and Chinese. "Leaflets were scattered from aircraft, mostly at night, since leaflets dropped during the day were quickly confiscated by the officers."¹³⁶ "...It was a Sunday afternoon," Zhukov recalled. — It was warm, calm weather. The

Japanese command, confident that the Soviet-Mongolian troops were not thinking about the offensive and were not preparing for it, allowed the generals and senior officers to take Sunday holidays. Many of them were far from their troops that day: some in Hailar, some in Khanchzhur, some in Janjin-Sume. We took this important circumstance into account when deciding to start the operation on Sunday."

On August 20, at 5:45 a.m., a massive bombing attack was carried out on the positions of the Japanese troops, in which more than 200 bombers took part under the cover of more than 300 fighters. Then, for 2 hours and 45 minutes, artillery preparation was carried out from more than 200 guns. Fifteen minutes before the infantry and tanks went over to the attack, 45 bombers struck again at the enemy, and artillery concentrated fire on his front line of defense. At 9 o'clock, the Soviet troops, together with the Mongolian units, went on the offensive. "This powerful air raid and artillery fire," noted in the report of the headquarters of the 1st Army Group, "immediately suppressed a significant part of the artillery and anti-aircraft weapons and destroyed part of the enemy's ammunition. Such a power of impact, as well as the offensive itself, turned out to be completely unexpected for the Japanese. As a result of a stubborn battle during August 20, by the end of the day, the Southern Group captured large sandy mounds 10 kilometers southeast of Nomon-Khan-Burd-Obo. The 82nd and 36th Rifle Divisions advanced 0.5–1 kilometer in separate sections. The northern group on the right flank captured the sands 4 kilometers east of Mount Bain-Tsagan, the left flank reached the state border. The advance in the center (against the main line of Japanese resistance) was insignificant."¹³⁷ Significant success was not achieved in the center due to the heavily fortified enemy defenses. For three days, the Central Group unsuccessfully stormed the enemy's defensive positions, and only on August 23, after careful preparation, was it possible to overcome his resistance.

At first, the Japanese did not attach any serious importance to the operation of the Soviet-Mongolian troops that had begun. "The enemy, apparently, on the morning of the 20th of this day, went over to offensive operations along the entire line," the commander of the 23rd Infantry Division Kamatsubara noted in his order,

¹³⁶ RGVA. F. 37 977. On. 1. D. 26. L. 172–173.

¹³⁷ Ibid. L. 172–190.

given at 20 o'clock on August 20 - and advances by ground units, interacting with bombers and fighters. His order of August 22 also looks strange, in which he indicates that "the enemy continues to push forward in the direction of both flanks" and demands, "smashing the enemy's front positions", to prepare for the subsequent offensive.

What kind of offensive could we talk about if the Japanese command was forced to patch up holes in one place or another? The troops of the 1st Army Group, taking advantage of the confusion of the enemy, continued to increase the onslaught and by the end of August 23 surrounded 4 enemy regiments. "Despite the fact that the order to reorganize the 6th Army was given even earlier, we have to state with sorrow that, due to the failure to comply with this order, the great mission to protect the northwestern region could not be carried out," he noted in his appeal to the personal composition of the army commander O. Rippo.

The ring of encirclement was steadily shrinking. To destroy the centers of enemy resistance, anti-tank guns were put forward for direct fire, part of the regimental and divisional artillery was used. Flamethrower tanks burned enemy machine-gun crews. By the end of the day on August 24, the enemy found himself in a complete operational and tactical encirclement, having only an exit to the northeast 6-7 km wide, shot through by artillery fire, tanks and armored vehicles. On the night of August 25, Zhukov brought the 9th motorized armored brigade from his reserve into battle, which struck in the direction of Nomon-Khan-Burd-Obo and captured the northern bank of the Khailastyn-Gol River, thereby turning the operational encirclement into a tactical one. At 2:30 pm on the same day, the troops of the 1st Army Group launched a general offensive and, meeting only slight enemy resistance, completed its rout within two days. Subsequently, until August 31, the destruction of the surviving small units continued. In an order dated August 27, Zhukov noted: "1. Invading the territory of the MPR in the area of the river. Khalkhin Gol Japanese

the group is surrounded and completely destroyed.

2. The troops of the 1st Armored Group are moving to guard and defend the state border of the MPR at the height of Eris-Ulain-Obo, height 625 (north of the ruins 14), having the main grouping of forces in the center ... Do not allow the enemy to penetrate into the territory of the MPR and, in case penetration into its limits, to destroy ... "138

Highly appreciating the actions of the commanders and fighters of the 1st Army Group, Georgy Konstantinovich at the same time demanded that they not forget about vigilance. "All personnel of formations and units should keep in mind that the enemy, utterly defeated in the operation we successfully carried out, may again try to violate the border and organize an offensive against our troops," he noted in an order dated August 31. We must therefore organize ourselves in such a way as to be in constant readiness to give a crushing rebuff to the enemy. The success of the upcoming defense of the state border by our troops will depend solely on our organization, discipline and comprehensive combat readiness. Our armgroup has sufficient

138 Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 137.

strength and good technique. It is necessary, without wasting a minute, to bring them into excellent condition, reasonably position them, prepare them for battle to solve any problems and always with little bloodshed.”¹³⁹

The Khalkingol "cauldron" shook the Kwantung Army to its foundations: its command in full force was forced to resign. As you know, having found itself in a hopeless situation, the Japanese government requested a truce. As a result of the negotiations that took place in Moscow between the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.M. actions while remaining on the lines they occupy.

How was the outcome of the operation assessed in Japan? An editorial in the Asahi newspaper of October 4, 1939, noted: “The people should pay tribute to the military authorities, who frankly admitted that they had done everything they could. This statement by the military, until now kept in strict confidence, dispelled all suspicions. This explanation was of great help. At the same time, we express our condolences to the victims, whose number was unexpectedly high. The events that have taken place are so great in size and seriousness that it is impossible to tell everything in one day. It is amazing how our small Japanese forces coped with the large enemy forces. Therefore, the steppe turned out to be strewn with the corpses of our brave men. The newspaper continued: “Our military authorities have learned from these events an instructive lesson that in the future military preparations must be brought to perfection. The military authorities have considered this lesson deeply enough. It is necessary to saturate the army to the limit with motorized units. This is the deepest meaning of the end-time battles. Until now, the people did not know to what a high degree the motorized units of the troops of the Soviet Union were equipped. Now there are many people who are struck by such a surprise. The leading newspaper stated that within four months Japan had lost 15,000 people. According to the newspaper, this circumstance requires a detailed investigation. In conclusion, Asahi writes: “We need to firmly grasp the lesson learned in the Nomon Khan area. We need to prepare, pull ourselves together and strive with all our might to complete the defense of the country, not only morally, but also materially. We felt this urgent need. This is the only way that will repay the emperor and calm the brave souls of the victims who fell at Nomon Khan. Note that the lesson really turned out to be very instructive: Japan did not dare to attack the USSR again - neither in 1941, nor

Later.

The historical literature provides various information about the losses of Japanese and Soviet troops. Thus, V.N. Vartanov notes that the Japanese 6th Army lost 61 thousand killed, wounded and captured, 660 aircraft, and the total losses of the Soviet-Mongolian troops amounted to over 18.5 thousand people.¹⁴⁰ The same data is given by M.A. .Gareev. IN

¹³⁹ Ibid. S. 140.

¹⁴⁰ See: Vartanov V.N. There, far away by the river ... (To the 50th anniversary of the defeat of the Japanese aggressors near the Khalkhin-Gol River.) // Military Historical Journal. 1989. No. 9. S. 69.

The capital work prepared by the staff of the General Staff and the Military Memorial Center of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on the basis of archival documents notes that the Japanese lost about 61 thousand people killed, wounded and captured, including only about 25 thousand people killed. The losses of the Soviet troops amounted to: irretrievable - 6472 people were killed and died from wounds at the stages of sanitary evacuation, 1160 died from wounds in hospitals and from diseases, 2028 were missing and 43 died in disasters and as a result of accidents; a total of 9,703 men, or 14 percent of the total troop strength; sanitary losses - 15,251 wounded, shell-shocked and burned, and 701 sick; a total of 15,952 people, or 23.1 percent of the total.¹⁴¹

The American historian Alvin Cooks, in his book *Nomongan*, published in 1985, concludes that the Japanese lost: in the ground forces - 8629 people killed, 9087 wounded and 2350 sick; in aviation - according to some sources, 141 killed and 89 wounded, according to others - 116 killed, 65 missing and 19 wounded.

Retired Japanese General G. Mishima, who commanded the 1st Heavy Artillery Regiment during the Khalkhingol events, after the end of World War II, outlined to Alvin Cooks the essence of his thoughts on the defeat of the Japanese troops. In particular, he noted that "fatal for the Nomongan case as a whole and the military operation carried out was the fact that the officers and soldiers of the Japanese imperial army did not know why they were dying in the desert, where the border was not clearly marked. While the army was at a standstill in southern China after many years of struggle, it was a form of mockery of common sense to "ride the wave" and sacrifice the life of even one soldier on the Mongolian border. For Mishima, "the failure of the military leadership is obvious, and at the highest, and not at the lowest level. The top leaders were in the clouds. They planned operations on too large a scale,

not taking into account the limited capabilities of the Japanese troops. The headquarters of the Kwantung Army, hatching aggressive plans, felt independent of the high command, and that, in turn, was unable to control the leadership of the Kwantung Army. The former general emphasized that the experience of the war in China played a cruel joke on the command: "It has become customary to expect that the enemy will be defeated whenever the forces of the Japanese imperial army decide to attack him. However, in Nomongan, the Japanese came across a "brick wall". They tried to approach the Russians in the same way as the Chinese. Of course, the moral factor must also be taken into account here, but the material might of the Red Army was even more important."¹⁴² What was new about the operation of the Soviet troops in the area of the Khalkhin Gol River for the development of military art?

Almost all the authors who touch on this topic to some extent unanimously note that it has enriched the Red Army with the experience of conducting modern operations with the massive use of aviation and

¹⁴¹ Russia and the USSR in the Wars of the 20th Century: A Statistical Study. pp. 177, 179.

¹⁴² Cit. Quoted from: Sokolov B. Unknown Zhukov: a portrait without retouching in the mirror of the era. pp. 143–144.

armored troops. The latter, in essence, were first used for independent actions, including for the development of success, the encirclement and destruction of the enemy. Based on this, important conclusions were made, in particular, a decision was made to form tank and mechanized divisions, united in mechanized corps. Armored troops were used in close cooperation. Tanks were mainly used to bypass the open flanks of the enemy, strike at the rear of the enemy and his closest reserves. At Khalkhin Gol, the first experience was gained in the struggle for air supremacy. Bomber, fighter and mixed aviation divisions began to be created in the Air Force. A characteristic feature of the operation was the use of aviation on the basis of a specially developed planning table. The experience of combat operations has shown the inefficiency of the use of individual aircraft and

small groups of aviation. The massive use of aviation made it possible to achieve air supremacy and contributed to the fastest defeat of the enemy by ground forces. A new phenomenon was the participation of large masses of aviation in artillery and aviation preparation. Forward observation posts of artillery were located as close as possible to the infantry, in its forward units there were separate guns and batteries, which made it possible to destroy firing points that hindered the advance of rifle subunits in a timely manner. At the same time, the density of artillery per 1 kilometer of the front (3-5 guns) turned out to be clearly insufficient to break through the defenses prepared in advance.

During combat operations, interaction was ensured by the joint location of the command posts of combined arms commanders and commanders of other branches of the armed forces, joint reconnaissance of the terrain and defense, the development of detailed plans for interaction, and the provision of uninterrupted communications between command posts of all levels. Radio, telephone communications, and the service of communications delegates were widely used to control the troops. All management was centralized in the hands of Zhukov, which ensured the effective use of all forces and means.

It is quite reasonably believed that the operation to encircle and destroy the Japanese 6th Army with the simultaneous creation of external and internal encirclement fronts was the prototype of the Stalingrad, Korsun-Shevchenko, Bobruisk and other operations, which were carried out on a large scale and impressive results during the Great Patriotic War under the direction or with the active participation of Zhukov.

The combat experience gained in the Khalkhingol operation was summarized immediately after the end of hostilities. It was reflected in the reports of the commander of the front group Stern and the military council of the 1st Army Group, presented to the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR in September 1939. The reports noted both positive and negative aspects in the actions of the Soviet troops. The main disadvantages were: weak single training of fighters, lack of solid skills in close combat, insufficient training for conducting night operations, poor training of rifle units in attacking a fortified enemy and switching to an attack from the move, and a number of others.

Based on the experience gained, recommendations were developed that formed the basis for the training of troops. Let us single out the most fundamental of them: commanders of all levels must observe the course of hostilities in the direction of the main attack; aviation commanders must be at the command posts of combined arms commanders; all efforts of the armed forces and aviation should be concentrated to ensure the actions of the infantry; for the direct escort of tanks, it is necessary to allocate guns, machine guns and sapper units; advanced observation artillery posts should be located at the command posts of rifle battalion commanders; as part of rifle regiments, it is necessary to have mortar batteries. ... In the military biography of Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov, Khalkhin-Gol played a truly crucial role. "... After the completion of the operation, I experienced great satisfaction. Not only because the operation was

successfully carried out, which I still love, but also because by my actions there, as it were, I justified myself, as if I threw away all those slanders and accusations that accumulated against me in previous years and about which I partly knew and partly guessed. I was happy with everything: our success, a new military rank, receiving the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. All this confirmed that I did what was expected of me, and what they tried to accuse me of earlier became a clear lie."¹⁴³

For valor and courage shown in the battles at Khalkhin Gol, almost 17.5 thousand fighters, commanders and political workers were awarded orders and medals, and 70 people were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, including G.M. Stern, M.P. .Yakovlev (posthumously). Pilots Ya.V. Smushkevich, S.I. Gritsevets, G.P. Kravchenko became the first twice Heroes of the Soviet Union in our country. "For the exemplary performance of combat missions and the heroism shown in the performance of combat missions," the high title of Hero of the Soviet Union was awarded on August 29, 1939 to commander Zhukov. He also received many high awards of the MPR: in 1939 - the Order of the Red Banner of War, in 1968 - the Order of Sukhe Bator, in 1969 - the Golden Star medal of the Hero of the MPR and the second Order of Sukhe Bator, in 1971 - the third order Sukhbaatar. "Love and admiration evokes the name of the honored commander of the Hero of the Soviet Union, commander G.K. Zhukov," Krasnaya Zvezda wrote in those

memorable days. "An excellent organizer, a man of indomitable will and immense courage, he managed to weld together people called upon to carry out the combat missions of the government." In connection with the end of hostilities, the 1st Army Group, by order of the People's Commissar of Defense, was reorganized, reduced and redeployed. The command and headquarters of

the group returned to Ulaanbaatar at the end of October. The family also came here to Zhukov. In mid-September, just before leaving, Alexandra Dievna received the following letter from Georgy Konstantinovich: "I am alive and well. You probably already know from the newspapers TASS reports about the battles on the Mongolian-Manchurian border. You now obviously understand why.

¹⁴³ Op. by: Simonov K.M. Notes on the biography of G.K. Zhukov // Military History Journal. 1987. No. 6. S. 54.

I urgently had to leave Smolensk. You should also be aware from the TASS report that the Japanese samurai are defeated both on the ground and in the air. But the enemy is very cunning, and one has to expect any trick from him. We are well aware of this and are always ready to respond to his actions with a double blow ... It is difficult to say how events will develop in the future. We are ready for the complete destruction of all this muck. So Erochka wanted daddy to fight, I feel this pleasure now. I feel very good in my actions. In short, the way it was in our civil war..."

Era, recalling a trip to Mongolia, wrote: "We traveled for seven days by train to Ulan-Ude, and from there by car to Ulaanbaatar. Everything was interesting to me, especially since for the first time we had a separate compartment, all in mahogany and velvet, but little Leka was unbearable, and at night she asked to go home. I remember how, passing Lake Baikal at night, about which my father wrote, my mother and I could not tear ourselves away from the car window, watching how the white and foamy wave of the lake almost approached the railway track. Then, for a very long time - 600 kilometers along a dusty road - they reached their destination by emka. Dad did not meet us, although, judging by the letters, he had such an intention. Having reached Ulaanbaatar, we arranged our life in the new house ourselves with the help of a guarantor and neighbors, who greeted us very cordially."

In Ulaanbaatar, the Zhukov family lived in a bright house on a hillock. There were several more houses nearby, where the families of the commander's colleagues were accommodated. His eldest daughter went to the fourth grade here, while the youngest was only in her third year. In Mongolia, Zhukov was respected and loved. In 1946, by a decree of the presidium of the Ulaanbaatar city self-government, he was elected an honorary citizen of the city. The house where he once lived with his family now stands on a wide avenue that bears his name. Here in 1979 a museum of Marshal G.K. Zhukov would have been created. The exhibits collected in it reflect the events that took place on the Khalkhin Gol River in those distant troubled years.

At a time when the fighting on Khalkhin Gol had not yet subsided, events were unfolding in Europe that drastically changed the lives and destinies of entire peoples and states. On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany attacked Poland. The Second World War began.

Chapter V. Games Without Illusions

I dreamed of seeing Moscow, walking along Red Square, along the old alleys, memorable from childhood. "Misha, I'm sending

you my regards, obviously, I'll be in Moscow in a month and a half, then we'll talk about everything, and now I'll say a few words. Spent the war, it seems, not bad. I'm healthy myself, now I'm setting things up, because during the war something got loose. I am sending you a gift that I received from the People's Commissar: a suit ... if it is too short for you, try to remake it. I shake your hand, George. Kiss Claudia Ilyinichna and Rita for me. The gift mentioned in Zhukov's letter to MM Pilihin was soon sent to Moscow.

"In the early days of November 1939, while in Ulaanbaatar, Georgy Konstantinovich sent me to Moscow with award materials," recalled his adjutant M.F. Vorotnikov. —

... Seeing off, Zhukov punished: "Go straight to my cousin, Mikhail Pilihin, hand over this suitcase and a letter. He lives not far from the Central Telegraph, in Bryusovsky Lane, 21. Tell me that I will certainly come with gifts, as I promised. But give this note to the director of the Central Voentorg." The last request might seem curious. The hero of the Khalkhingol events, the formidable tamer of the samurai horde ... asked to sell a few meters of chintz for his daughters and salted sprats in jars. What to do? The times were hard. There was no material abundance in the country. It was not from a good life that he made such a request to trade workers. Zhukov was still in Mongolia, where, at the end of hostilities, units of the 1st Army Group were engaged in regular peacetime studies. Time, which inexorably vanished.

When Hitler began active preparations for the redivision of the world, Great Britain and France, considering Germany a counterbalance to communism, tried to direct her aspirations to the East. The policy of "appeasement of the aggressor" gave the Nazis a free hand. In November, the Anti-Comintern Pact of 1936 between Germany and Japan was concluded, Italy joining it a year later. In the same year, Germany introduces its troops into the remilitarized Rhine zone, and in the fall, together with Italy, takes part in the Spanish Civil War on the side of General B. Franco. In March 1938, Germany carried out the Anschluss of Austria, and in September sought the conclusion of the Munich Agreement on the transfer of the Sudetenland from the heads of governments of Italy, France and Great Britain. A year later, Germany had already completely captured Czechoslovakia and the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda (Memel). The activation of Germany and Italy in the international arena forced the Soviet leadership to take a number of political, diplomatic and military measures. In

1936, the USSR began to support the republican government of Spain, and the following year came to the aid of China, which had become a victim of Japanese aggression. These actions, as well as the strengthening of the activities of the Comintern, backed by the Soviet Union, led to a deterioration in relations with the countries of the West. As a result, the USSR found itself in international isolation. But already in April 1939, Great Britain and France responded to the proposal of the Soviet government to start negotiations, which took place in the summer of that year. However, they did not lead to success, as the parties held opposing views on most issues. In addition, the British leadership entered into secret contacts with representatives of Germany, hoping to return it to the Munich policy or conclude a bilateral agreement. This became known to Moscow. On August 7, JV Stalin was informed of the possibility of an imminent German attack on Poland. Given the circumstances, the Soviet leadership went to rapprochement with Germany, concluding with her on August 23 a non-aggression pact and a secret additional protocol. At the same time, Moscow hoped to maintain its neutrality and improve its own strategic position at the expense of the eastern lands of Poland (Western Ukraine and

Western Belarus). Commissar for Foreign Affairs V.M. Molotov, speaking on August 31 at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, stated that the Soviet-German non-aggression pact not only eliminates the threat of war with Germany, but also "narrows the field of possible military

clashes in Europe and serves the cause of world peace.

In "Memoirs and Reflections" Zhukov noted:

assessment of the non-aggression pact concluded with

could be attacked by two fronts - the side of Germany and the side of Japan - there is no reason for the CPSU (b) to assert that JV Stalin relied on the Soviet Central Committee on him. and rid the USSR of the government proceeded from the pact from the threat of fascist aggression, but gave the opportunity to gain primacy in the East by strengthening our didn't have to hear from Not united anti-Soviet front.

In any case, to me I.V. Stalin any from reassuring judgments related non-aggression pact" . 144

The leadership of Nazi Germany, having concluded a non-aggression pact with the USSR, began to implement its plans to establish world domination. At dawn on September 1, 1939, German troops, in accordance with the Weiss plan, launched a surprise attack on Poland and quickly achieved major operational successes. Despite the fact that France, Great Britain and the countries of the British Commonwealth declared war on Germany, they did not provide real help to Poland.

Meanwhile, the leadership of the Soviet Union carried out measures aimed at increasing the combat readiness of its Armed Forces. On August 19, 1939, at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, a decision was made to deploy new troops, and on August 22, People's Commissar of Defense K.E. "from emergency reserves."

On September 2, the Council of People's Commissars approved the plan for the reorganization of the Red Army for 1939-1940. According to it, it was planned to have 173 rifle divisions in the Red Army, and the total strength of the peacetime army was determined at 2 million 265 thousand people. After the invasion of German troops into Poland, preparations began for the Red Army's campaign in the western regions of this state. On

September 17, 1939, Soviet troops crossed the eastern border of Poland and, in accordance with the Soviet-German secret protocol, reached the border of the rivers Narew, Western Bug, San. The western regions of Belarus and Ukraine were annexed to the USSR. On September 28, the "Treaty of Friendship and Borders" was signed between Germany and the USSR, after which the Soviet leadership actually curtailed anti-fascist propaganda in the country and in the outside world, which naturally played into the hands of the aggressor. Molotov formulated his official position in a report at an extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on October 31: Germany is in the position of a state striving for an early end to the war and for peace, while England and France stand for the continuation of the war. "It is not only senseless, but also criminal to wage such a war," Molotov noted, "as a war "for the destruction of Hitlerism," covered up with a false flag of struggle for "democracy."

On the day of the signing of the Soviet-German "Treaty of Friendship and Borders", the government of the USSR concluded an agreement on mutual assistance with Estonia, and later similar agreements were signed with Latvia and

Lithuania. The Soviet Union received the right to deploy its troops in the Baltic republics and create naval and air bases on their territory, which was stipulated in special military conventions.

At the end of November 1939, the Soviet-Finnish war began. The troops of the Leningrad District got involved in heavy fighting, which took on a protracted character. On February 11, 1940, the Red Army units launched another offensive on the Karelian Isthmus and broke through the Mannerheim Line, forcing Finland to sign a peace treaty in March 1940. In the course of this war, major shortcomings were revealed in the organization, training and management of units and formations of the Red Army. Therefore, Voroshilov was removed from the post of People's Commissar of Defense in May, and the commander of the Kyiv Special Military District, S.K. Timoshenko, who immediately became Marshal of the Soviet Union, was appointed in his place. At this time, the German troops successfully carried out their "blitzkrieg" in the Western European theater of operations.

On April 9, 1940, they attacked Denmark and Norway; on May 10, they attacked France through Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands. On June 10, Italy entered the war against France and England, and on June 22, an act of capitulation of France was signed in the forest near Compiègne. Such was the result of the policy of the "appeasers". On May 7, 1940, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was published on the introduction of general military ranks in the Red Army. On June 4, G.K. Zhukov was

awarded the rank of army general. The next day, Krasnaya Zvezda published an editorial entitled "Their services to the Motherland are great", which stated the following: "Three glorious commanders were awarded the title of army general: Hero of the Soviet Union G.K. Zhukov, Hero of the Soviet Union K.A. Meretskov and I.V. Tyulenev. General of the Army G.K. Zhukov is a participant in the Civil War, a career commander, who has successively passed a number of senior and higher positions, and has a broad operational outlook. When the 23rd Japanese division of General Kamatsubara crossed the river to Mount Bain-Tsagan, trying to penetrate into the territory of the friendly Mongolian People's Republic, it was defeated by Soviet tank units. Here, according to the idea of Comrade. Zhukov, for the first time, large tank masses independently acted on the battlefield. "Bain Tsagansky massacre" - under this name the defeat of the Japanese division went down in history. Army General Zhukov developed and brilliantly carried out the operation of the complete encirclement and final destruction of the 6th Japanese Army, which invaded the borders of the MPR.

According to Zhukov's memoirs, in early May he received an order from Moscow to appear at the People's Commissariat of Defense for appointment to a new position. The Brief Biographical Information about Zhukov, compiled in 1957, states that he completed his service in Mongolia in April 1940, was at the disposal of the People's Commissar of Defense from April to June, and in June was appointed commander of the Kiev Special Military District. In the "Personal Personnel Registration Sheet" filled out by Georgy Konstantinovich in 1948, the end of service in Mongolia is also dated April, but the entry into command of the KOVO troops is May 1940. M.M. Pilikhin stated: "In May 1940, Georgy telegraphed us to Moscow: "We will be in Moscow on the 15th. Meet.

Zhukov". At the motor depot (the motor depot of the NKVD. - V.D.), where I worked, there was Marina Raskova's Opel-Cadet. I asked her for a car to meet G.K. Zhukov with his family from Mongolia. I received permission, and Klavdiya Ilyinichnaya and my daughter Rita went to meet George and his family at the Yaroslavy railway station. A car also came from the People's Commissariat of Defense. A train approached, and we went to the car in which Zhukov and his family arrived. But he was already walking towards us, with the first Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union on his chest and orders of the Mongolian People's Republic. He hugged us with great joy and said: "Here we are all together again!". There are different accounts of how the Zhukov family arrived in Moscow.

Pilikhin says that he met relatives at the station, and Era Georgievna recalls that they had already flown from Mongolia to Moscow by plane with her father. "For all of us, this was the first air travel, and we were very excited. In Moscow, we were placed in the Moskva Hotel, famous in those years, where we lived for more than a month, until my father received a new assignment to Kyiv and left there.

All these discrepancies in the memories of different people, of course, in this case have no fundamental significance. It is important to keep in mind something else: almost always, memoirs contain certain inaccuracies, sometimes fundamental ones, which are the result of not conscious distortions, but natural errors of human

memory.

An indelible impression on Zhukov was made by a meeting with I.V. Stalin. When Georgy Konstantinovich walked towards her, he experienced some trembling in his soul, but he saw in front of him a man, at first glance, of the most ordinary, small stature, slightly shorter than himself, calm, affable, very attentive. Kalinin, Molotov and other members of the Politburo were also in the office. When asked how Zhukov assesses the Japanese army, he replied: "The Japanese soldier who fought with us at Khalkhin Gol is well trained, especially for close combat. Disciplined, efficient and stubborn in combat, especially in defensive combat. The junior command staff is very well trained and fights with fanatical tenacity. As a rule, junior commanders do not surrender and do not stop at the "hara-kiri". Officers, especially senior and senior officers, are poorly trained, have little initiative and tend to act according to a template. Stalin and Kalinin questioned Zhukov for a long time and in detail about the actions of the Soviet troops and the difficulties they had to face, about the goals of the Japanese invasion of Mongolia, about the help that top military leaders provided Zhukov, about his conclusions on these and other problems of the armed clash in the Khalkhin region. - Gola.

Zhukov, in turn, asked how the extremely passive nature of the war in the West should be understood and how military operations there are supposed to develop in the future. To this, Stalin replied that the French government headed by Daladier and the British government with Chamberlain did not want to seriously get into a war with Germany. They still hope to incite Hitler to go to war with us. By refusing in 1939 to create an anti-Hitler bloc with us, they thereby did not want to tie Hitler's hands in his aggression against the Soviet Union. But nothing will come of it. They will have to pay for their own short-sighted policies.

After a detailed conversation, Stalin announced the decision to appoint

Zhukov as commander of the troops of the Kyiv Special Military District. Returning Georgy Konstantinovich, the hotel, full of impressions from the conversation, could not fall asleep for a long time. Later he admitted: appearance, his quiet voice, the concreteness and depth of his judgments, his knowledge of military issues, the attention with which he listened to the report, made a great impression on me. If he is always like this with everyone, it is not clear why there is a persistent rumor about him as a terrible person? Then I didn't want to believe the bad."¹⁴⁵

There was another reason for insomnia. Zhukov stepped over several rungs of the career ladder at once, and yet he had to take over the largest military district in the country. Yes, before that he gained solid experience in managing units and formations at the tactical level, gained some experience at the operational level, being the deputy commander of the Belarusian Military District and the commander of an army group. But will all this be enough for work on an operational-strategic scale? Of course, one should not be surprised at such a turn in a military career, since repressions in the Red Army led to a catastrophic shortage of qualified command and staff workers at all levels. Therefore, armies and military districts in the prewar years were headed by commanders, who in most cases had previously occupied the tactical level.

Well, Zhukov's track record, his military talent, which was so clearly manifested at Khalkhin Gol, looked more than solid. The time has come for departure to Kyiv. G.M.Mikhailov, who was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for Khalkhin Gol, kept memories of the farewell: "G.K. Zhukov thanked everyone who came to see him off to his new duty station. He was reserved in conversation. Sometimes he joked and said: "We will meet again." - It seemed to us, seeing off, that Zhukov was upset, and some

they said that he even shed a tear.

Later, M.F. Vorotnikov decided to ask Zhukov about the reason for these tears: "Marshal did not answer right away ... - I was

appointed to a responsible post - to command one of the most important border districts. In conversations with Stalin, Kalinin and other members of the Politburo, I finally strengthened the idea that the war is close, it is inevitable. Yes, and the post of commander of such a responsible border district, which is new for me, is evidence of this. But what will it be, this war? Are we ready for it? Can we do everything? And with a feeling of an impending tragedy, I looked at my relatives and comrades carelessly seeing me off, at Moscow, at the joyful faces of Muscovites and thought: what will happen to us? Many did not understand this. I somehow felt uneasy, and I could not restrain myself. I thought the war had already begun for me. But, having entered the car, he immediately discarded sentimental feelings. Since then, my personal life has been subordinated to the upcoming war, although there was still peace on our land ... "In the Kiev Special Military District at command and staff

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. S. 273.

positions were mostly experienced personnel who escaped repression. The chief of staff was Lieutenant General M.A. Purkaev, a military man who knew his business comprehensively, a man of high culture. Zhukov worked with him in the Belarusian military district. The district artillery was commanded by General N.D. Yakovlev, a major specialist in the field of technology and its combat use. With two army commanders - Generals I.N. Muzychenko and F.Ya. Kostenko - Zhukov had a chance to serve for a long time in the 4th Don Cossack Division. The head of the operational department of the district headquarters was Colonel P.N. Rubtsov, whom Zhukov knew from the central apparatus of the People's Commissariat of Defense. True, he was soon replaced by Colonel I. Kh. Bagramyan, who was operationally competent, thoughtful, calm, and hardworking. Well, the head of supply of the district turned out to be a former colleague of Zhukov, whom Georgy Konstantinovich defended from slander at the height of the repressions - V.E. Belokoskov.

In the very first days of the new service, Zhukov met with the secretaries of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine. "Having told about the actions of our troops in defeating the 6th Japanese army at Khalkhin Gol and sharing my first impressions," he recalled, "I asked for help in providing the district with material and domestic support. I met with the most friendly attitude and was glad that everything was going so well."¹⁴⁶

The foundation of an army is discipline. Under conditions of imminent military danger, the slightest indulgence will lead not only to a decrease in combat capability, but also to tragic consequences. Here it must be said that over the years of repression, discipline and diligence in the Red Army fell sharply, in many units and formations a complete collapse of order reigned. A firm hand in the district was felt immediately. In this regard, Zhukov's order of June 21 is eloquent:

"A survey conducted by the employees of the PUOKR (the political department of the district. - V.D.) of the state of party political work and the progress of combat and political training in the 28th road maintenance regiment revealed flagrant disgrace, leading the regiment to decay. Mass unauthorized absences of fighters from the unit, collective drunkenness of Red Army soldiers and commanders, accompanied by debauchery, hooliganism, collective failure to comply with orders became common in the regiment.

Unauthorized absences of Red Army soldiers from the regiment on certain days reached 170 people. Only from May 12 to June 8, 1940, during the regiment's stay in Gusyatin, over 30 group drunkenness and mass cases (not countable) of individual drunkenness. It got to the point that drinking was done literally

every day. The lack of control, carelessness and irresponsibility of the command staff led to the fact that every day more than a hundred fighters roam around the city idle, go to the villages in the evenings in search of vodka, change products for vodka. Moreover, many commanders, instead of fighting such disgrace

themselves, before the eyes of the fighters, get drunk and rowdy.

... All this became possible because in the regiment there is an exceptionally tolerant attitude towards these outrages, there is no

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. S. 275.

exactingness, the presence of corruption among individual commanders, a complete lack of education, concern for people and an exceptionally low level of party political work. The regiment commander, Colonel

Yegorov, is irresponsible and indifferent to his duties. He does not enforce Soviet military discipline in the unit with a firm hand. The regimental commissar, senior political instructor Kirilkin, does not direct

party political work, does not engage in political education, rarely happens in units, is not connected with the fighters, does not respond to reports and complaints from the fighters and does not respond for months ... "

Tough decisions followed, as always: the commander of the regiment, Colonel Yegorov, the military commissar of the regiment, senior political officer Kirilkin, the commander of the 2nd battalion, senior lieutenant Shostel, were removed from their posts and petitioned the people's commissar to bring the Military Tribunal to trial; remove the commander of a technical company, junior military technician Panchenko, from his post and postpone the assignment of the next military rank for systematic drunkenness; malicious violators of discipline, the Red Army soldiers Kravchenko, Zinchenko and others, to be brought to trial by the Military Tribunal.¹⁴⁷ Extremely hard work, complete dedication.

During June, it was difficult to find Zhukov at the district headquarters. During this time, he visited almost all units and formations, conducted large command and staff exercises of the district, then - a command and staff field trip with communications equipment to the region of Ternopil, Lvov, Vladimir-Volynsky, Dubno. It was exactly where in 1941 the Germans, according to the Barbarossa plan, delivered their main blow in Ukraine. And again you have to lead the troops in combat conditions. In June 1940, the leadership of the USSR made

representations to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia containing demands to immediately form new governments capable of honestly fulfilling the mutual assistance treaty, to ensure free access to the territory of these countries for additional Red Army contingents. Only 10 hours were allotted for the fulfillment of these instructions of an ultimatum nature. At the appointed time, all the demands were accepted, but, despite this, the troops of the Red Army (10 rifle divisions and 7 tank brigades) crossed the borders of the three states on June 17. Under the control of the Extraordinary Commissioners of the Government of the USSR A.A. Zhdanov, A.Ya. Vyshinsky and V.G. composition of the USSR. Following the Baltics came the turn of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. On June 26, the Soviet government handed over to the Romanian representative a note proposing "to proceed jointly with Romania to an immediate solution of the question of the return of Bessarabia to the Soviet Union. " and Northern Bukovina

¹⁴⁷ See: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 147–149.

¹⁴⁸ Op. by: True. 1940. June 29.

within four days, starting at 14:00 Moscow time 28 June."

The task of liberating "Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia from the occupation of Romania" was entrusted to the troops of the Southern Front, created from three armies: the 12th - under the command of Major General F.A. Parusinov, the 5th - under the command of Lieutenant General V.F. Gerasimenko (Kiev Special Military District) and the army formed from the troops of the Odessa Military District under the command of Lieutenant General I.V. Boldin. The command of the front was assigned to Zhukov. After long negotiations, the Romanian government nevertheless agreed to withdraw its troops from Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, and the matter was dealt with peacefully.

According to Zhukov's memoirs, in order to avoid unwanted incidents during the withdrawal of the Romanian troops, the parties agreed on the following: Romania would withdraw its troops 20 kilometers a day, and the Red Army would move forward at the same pace to the liberated territory. At the same time, the Romanian side undertook to leave intact the railway transport, equipment of factories, material reserves. However, soon the command of the Southern Front became aware that the Romanians, having failed to fulfill their obligations, began to hastily remove everything that was possible from the liberated territory.

"In order to stop these violations of the treaty terms, we decided to send out two airborne brigades to capture all the bridges across the river. Two tank brigades were tasked with overtaking the retreating columns of the Romanian troops on the Prut River. Having made a rapid march throw (about kilometers), our tank units appeared 200 landings at the same time units, local authorities, all those who wanted to escape to Romania as soon as possible, panic arose. The officers, leaving their parts of the staff property, also fled across the river. In short, the royal troops appeared before the Soviet troops in an extremely deplorable manner and demonstrated a complete lack of combat capability.

And

V

condition and

149

The next day, Stalin called Zhukov on HF, who reported on a complaint from the Romanian ambassador that the Soviet command, in violation of the agreement, had thrown an airborne assault on the Prut River, cutting off all escape routes. The ambassador claimed that the Soviet command landed "tank units from aircraft and dispersed the Romanian troops." Zhukov reported to Stalin on the measures he had taken and said that he did not transfer tanks by air, since there were no special aircraft for this. Apparently, he added, "it seemed to the retreating troops with fright that the tanks had appeared from the air." Stalin laughed and said: "Collect the abandoned weapons and put them in order. As for factory equipment and railway transport, take care of it. I will now instruct the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to protest to the Romanian government."

At the VIII session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in early August 1940, laws were adopted that legally formalized the inclusion of the three Baltic republics into the Soviet Union and the formation of the Moldavian

SSR.

Despite the elegance of the operation carried out by Zhukov, the campaign of the troops of the Southern Front in Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina revealed significant shortcomings in their training and education. In his directive dated July 17, 1940, the commander of the Kiev Special Military District singled out the poor organization of the march headquarters and the regulation service, the lack of means of communication with aviation in the ground forces, the inability to carry out camouflage when resting and monitor the air, the low degree of training of the Red Army and equestrian composition to carry out long and especially night marches, poor organization of artillery reconnaissance, insufficient training in the interaction of tanks with infantry and artillery, unsatisfactory training of pontoon and engineer battalions for organizing crossings and building bridges. And again, there is a lack of proper military discipline, which led to a large number of violations of order and emergencies. After analyzing the results of the campaign, Zhukov radically changes the plan for combat training of the district troops. The set of measures developed by him affects the combat readiness of all subunits, units and formations, of all

personnel - from a soldier to a high-level commander. In order to develop speed and efficiency in the performance of combat missions, systematic drills for getting up on alert are prescribed. From now on, only on alarm, troops rise to field exercises. In the tactical training of command personnel and troops, emphasis is placed on practicing offensive combat with overcoming the barrier strip and large water barriers, defensive combat with the construction of a barrier strip, and reconnaissance. Marches and combat actions of mechanized formations and units are practiced in difficult terrain: wooded-mountainous, marshy and sandy. In training staffs and improving command and control of troops, control by radio and aircraft is taken as the basis. The combat training plan also includes shooting, sports and equestrian sports competitions.

Zhukov, who closely followed the developments in the West, where the German army achieved significant success, widely using tank and mechanized units, deployed anti-tank defense training in the troops. On July 21, he signed an order emphasizing that anti-tank defense should be a permanent and daily form of combat. Anti-tank guns, heavy machine guns, bundles of hand grenades, combustible liquid, anti-tank mines, land mines, in combination with natural and artificial barriers, should create insurmountable obstacles in the zone of action of enemy tanks. Attention was also paid to the moral preparation, the stability of the fighters in the fight against tanks.¹⁵⁰

No less important role was assigned to air defense. The order dated August 8 stated: "Aviation in modern wars is a powerful means of struggle. Therefore, the careful organization of strong air defense in all cases of combat activity of troops is a daily and important task for commanders of all levels and their headquarters."¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ See: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 154–155.

¹⁵¹ RGVA. F. 25 880. Op. 4. D. 354. L. 756.

In September 1940, People's Commissar of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union S.K. Timoshenko arrived in the district with an inspection check. A tactical training review of the 41st Rifle Division took place in the Rava Russkaya area. The aviation of the district took part in the bilateral field exercise, the artillery showed itself very well. Then there were inspection exercises in the 99th division, field exercises of headquarters. For excellent training, the headquarters of the 37th Rifle Corps was awarded the challenge Red Banner of the General Staff of the Red Army, and commander S.M. Kondrusev was awarded a gold watch.

"I must say that the inspection exercises in the presence of top military leaders were very instructive and mobilizing," Zhukov noted. - S.K. Timoshenko knew the combat training of a fighter, units and subunits well and loved this business. With his appointment as People's Commissar of Defense in the combat training of the troops, the right course was taken, as demanded by the party - to teach what was needed in the war. Especially a lot we began to engage in reconnaissance, the combat use of the terrain, both for offensive and defensive purposes. We tirelessly inspired the fighters, sergeants and commanders that a unit and a unit only become a formidable force for the enemy when their entire composition is perfectly prepared. 152 Perhaps in the pre-war period, the most important milestone in the formation of Zhukov's military leadership views was the meeting of the top command

staff of the Red Army which took place in December 1940. Rather, not even the meeting itself, but a report on the topic "The nature of the modern offensive operation", which the General Staff instructed him to prepare. The task was very responsible, and the commander of the district troops had clearly not enough time for theoretical analysis and substantiation of his ideas, convictions and military experience. I.Kh.Bagramyan, head of the operational department of the headquarters of the 12th Army, Zhukov's classmate at the higher cavalry school, helped. Ivan Khristoforovich arrived in the Kiev district from the post of senior lecturer at the Military Academy of the General Staff, which was very useful. Bagramyan recalled that, having asked him to help prepare a report, Georgy Konstantinovich enthusiastically began to express his point of view: "Everything should be based on real possibilities. The successes of the Germans in the West, based on the massive use of tank and motorized troops and aviation, make us think a lot. Unfortunately, we do not yet have such large operational mechanized formations. Our mechanized corps are still in the formation stage. And war could break out at any moment. We cannot build our operational plans based on what we will have in one and a half to two years. We must rely on the forces that our border districts have today."¹⁵³

In his memoirs, Zhukov highly appreciated Bagramyan's help. In addition to him, Lieutenant Colonel G.V. Ivanov, a graduate of the Academy of the General Staff, who arrived in the district for an internship, was involved in the development of the report. It can be seen from the text of the report that serious theoretical works were used in its preparation. Notably, for example,

¹⁵² Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 288.

¹⁵³ Op. by: Bagramyan I.X. Thus the war began. M., 2000. S. 16.

the influence of the book of the famous military theorist V.K. Triandafillov "The nature of the operations of modern armies", other scientific works. However, during the repressions, the color of Soviet military-theoretical thought was destroyed, which affected the quality and quantity of research into problems of military theory. Young commanders who graduated from the military academies of that time began to deal with them. Military historian I.A. Korotkov, who published in 1980 a meaningful analytical work "The History of Soviet Military Thought. (Brief essay. 1921-June 1941)", wrote: "Noting the broad nature of the research into issues of operational art and tactics, it is necessary to say about those issues whose development was not completed or was only outlined by military theorists of the 20s - early 30s . Thus, the theory of operational art considered mainly the scale of an army operation, almost without affecting the theory of a front-line operation ... "154

It must be borne in mind that military-theoretical thought in the pre-war years developed under the conditions of Stalin's personality cult. This had a significant impact on research topics, in which articles devoted to his views on the war and various problems of military affairs became predominant. Assessing the strategic nature of a future war, most researchers singled out its offensive orientation. In the Provisional Field Manual of the Red Army (1936), which was in force before and at the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, it was noted: "Any attack on the socialist state of workers and peasants will be repelled with all the might of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, with the transfer of hostilities to enemy territory. The combat actions of the Red Army will be carried out to annihilate."¹⁵⁵ Even more clearly, the offensive nature of the strategy is reflected in the draft Field Manual of the Red Army of 1939: "If the enemy imposes war on us, the Workers 'and Peasants' Red Army will be the most attacking of all ever attacking armies. We will wage the war offensively, with the most resolute goal of completely defeating the enemy on his own territory."¹⁵⁶ The same was true in practice: in exercises and maneuvers, the option prevailed according to which the Red Army from the first days of the war inflicted defeat on the enemy, driving him back from the border and attacked enemy territory.

At a meeting of the highest command staff of the Red Army, leading employees of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the General Staff, heads of the Central Directorates, commanders, members of military councils and chiefs of staff of military districts, armies, heads of military academies, inspector generals of military branches, commanders of some corps, divisions - in total more than 270 people. The first to report on the topic "Results and tasks of combat training of the ground

forces, air force and operational training of the highest command personnel" was the chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, General of the Army K. A.

154 Korotkov I.A. History of Soviet military thought. (A short essay. 1921-June 1941.) M., 1980. S. 161.

155 Provisional Field Charter of the Red Army. 1936. (PU-36). M., 1937. S. 9.

156 Field Charter of the Red Army. 1939. Project. M., 1939. Art. 2.

Meretskov. He covered all the essential aspects of the state of the Red Army, its branches of service, and on the basis of this he emphasized the need for a deep restructuring of the Armed Forces. Of particular concern were the methods of using mechanized and aviation formations, the unsatisfactory training of senior command personnel, and shortcomings in staffing the Red Army with command personnel and in the technical equipment of individual branches of the armed forces.

After discussing Meretskov's report, Zhukov was given the floor. A red thread through his report was an analysis of the experience of recent wars and modern military operations in the West. It was emphasized that the development of advanced armies is carried out along the line of building up offensive means of warfare, that is, development is aimed, both quantitatively and especially qualitatively, at creating large air forces, armored formations, improving mechanized artillery and, finally, motorization of the army. As a result of the widespread introduction of modern technical means in the army, operational art has acquired such powerful factors as speed and force of impact. The speed of development of operations, as shown by recent battle experience, is achieved mainly due to the sudden, bold and massive use of aviation, airborne assault forces, tank and motorized formations.

A special role was played by the assessment of the military actions of Germany. This is again the bold and decisive use of tank divisions and mechanized corps in close cooperation with the air force throughout the entire depth of the enemy's operational defense, decisive strikes by mechanized corps in an oncoming battle and their desire to independently break through to the rear of the enemy's operational group, the massive use of parachute landing units and air divisions to capture the most important objects in the immediate and deep rear of the enemy and at the same time the frequent use of the form of the enemy. Zhukov noted that when breaking through fortified areas, the Germans paid special attention to the close interaction of infantry, artillery, tanks, sappers and aviation. Before attacking one or another fortified area, intensive preparations were carried out in the rear for an attack on training fields and mock-ups. "In general, the Germans in this respect fully used the experience of Suvorov in preparing the assault on Ishmael." The German command achieved an unprecedented high pace of offensive operations. Poland was defeated in 18 days (on average, the daily advance is 30 kilometers),

Holland, Belgium and Northern France - in 20 days, which is equal to the rate of advance of 20 kilometers per day. The defeat of France was carried out in 18 days, which is 16 kilometers per day in terms of the rate of advance, while the advance of motorized forces reached 100-120 kilometers. Offensive operations, as a rule, were preceded by the advance development of a powerful network of espionage agents and sabotage groups. These agents, as a rule, sat down closer to airfields, fortified areas, warehouses, railway bridges and other important objects. Using the data of this agency, the Germans acted for sure. Subversive groups in the rear terrorized the population, destroyed communications, killed important officers and seized the most important documents.

The report drew attention to the continuity of German operations,

which was ensured by their preliminary, thorough preparation, the availability of a plan for the subsequent operation, the use of powerful road transport and a widely developed network of railways for large-scale regrouping of troops and rear arrangements, and the presence of echeloned reserves. It should be noted that everything new in the actions of the German army,

which Zhukov spoke about, he later successfully uses when attacking the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, not everything was taken into account when preparing the Red Army for war, which had the most tragic effect on the outcome of border battles in the summer of 1941.

Despite the fact that the topic of the report was devoted to offensive operations, Zhukov touched upon the fundamental issues of modern defense. First, its peculiarity is that even in peacetime, fortified areas and deep field defense positions with anti-tank, anti-personnel and other obstacles are being built on all the most important sections of the state border. Secondly, modern defense is built to the entire operational strategic depth, while it is organized with the aim of not only repelling enemy air strikes, not only exhausting the attacker on the approaches to the defense, but also in order to, by splitting, exhausting, weakening the attacker, maneuvering his own reserves, seek to defeat him.

As the main feature of a modern offensive operation, Zhukov put forward the need to strike in several decisive directions, to the entire depth of the operational formation, with the release of large mobile forces to the flank and to the rear of the main enemy grouping. The most effective is an offensive bypassing one or both flanks of the enemy, which leads to a direct strike on the enemy's weakest and most vulnerable points. The most decisive form of an offensive operation is simultaneous strong blows on both flanks of the defense, which make it possible to seize the enemy's position in strong pincers and crush him by encircling him on the battlefield. It is quite natural that for Zhukov the actions of the Red Army units at Khalkhin Gol became an example of such an operation.

The speaker drew special attention of the conference participants to the organization of command and control, which should be rigid and centralized. In order to achieve full interaction between the corps, purposefulness in their actions, the army commander will often indicate to them the direction of the main and auxiliary strikes, the combat formation of the corps, the order and methods of action. However, Zhukov warned, such instructions should be approached with caution and should not be resorted to unnecessarily. In conditions of a mobile war against a mobile and skillful enemy, commanders will be required who are brought up to show reasonable initiative and great independence, otherwise the commanders, accustomed to doing everything according to the schedule, will be defeated by an active and enterprising enemy in the very first battle. Summing up his speech, Zhukov noted that the Red Army, wherever its units are currently deployed, must be ready to fight with a skillful and technically equipped

enemy. The modern development of means of combat creates a broad basis for conducting an offensive operation, makes it possible to carry it out with high

at a fast pace and at a great distance. With equal forces and means, victory will be ensured by the side that is more skillful in managing and creating conditions for surprise in the use of these forces and means. The surprise of the modern operation is one of the decisive factors of victory. Attaching the utmost importance to surprise, it is necessary to widely introduce into the troops all methods of camouflage and deception of the enemy. Camouflage and deception should be the most important topic in the training of troops, commanders and staffs. The Red Army in future battles must show a high class of operational and tactical surprise.

Zhukov's report was met with great interest and sparked a lively discussion. Marshal of the Soviet Union S. K. Timoshenko, People's Commissar for Defense, delivered a closing speech at the meeting. It is quite understandable that some of his judgments, especially from the height of our modern military-historical knowledge, look far from flawless. However, the conclusion that "in the sense of strategic creativity, the experience of the war in Europe, perhaps, does not provide anything new" is bewildering. Indeed, by that time it was already clear to many that this war, with its military-political plans, methods of unleashing, the scale, depth and speed of operations, the integrated use of the armed forces and combat arms to achieve political and strategic goals, marked a qualitatively new stage in the development of military art. There is no doubt that the conference drew basically correct conclusions about the nature and characteristics of a possible war, defined fundamental views on an offensive operation, and the massive use of the latest means of armed

struggle. At the same time, by the beginning of 1941, the Red Army, in terms of its structure, technical equipment, the level of operational training of command personnel and staffs, and many other parameters, was not yet ready to wage war. Zhukov himself noted: "On the whole, the work of the meeting showed that Soviet military-theoretical thought basically correctly determined the main directions in the development of modern military art. It was necessary to translate all this into the combat practice of the troops as soon as possible."¹⁵⁷

Immediately after the meeting, two bilateral operational-strategic map games were held. It must be said that both the meeting and the course of the games were under the close attention of Stalin. Perhaps they can be compared with the general review of the senior officers of the Red Army on the eve of the inevitable war. It is unlikely that anyone harbored illusions about its inevitability, and about the main enemy in the upcoming clash.

Back in early autumn, on September 18, 1940, People's Commissar of Defense S.K. Timoshenko and Chief of the General Staff K.A. Meretskov presented to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, I.V. Stalin and V.M. Forces in the West and in the East for 1940 and 1941, which noted the high probability of an armed clash on the western borders and did not exclude the possibility of an attack from Japan. Germany was considered as the most likely adversary, it was envisaged to be involved in

¹⁵⁷ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. S. 291.

war against the USSR Italy, Hungary, Finland, Romania, Turkey. However, describing in detail the forces that could be deployed against our borders, the authors of the report noted that "the General Staff does not have documentary data on the operational plans of potential adversaries, both in the West and in the East." Therefore, it was suggested that Germany would deploy its main forces north of the mouth of the San River in order to deliver the main blow from East Prussia through the Baltic in the direction of Minsk, and auxiliary blows from Lomzha and Brest in the direction of Baranovich - Minsk. If Finland comes out on the side of Germany, then the support of her army by German divisions for an attack on Leningrad from the northwest was not ruled out. In the south, the possibility of an offensive by the Romanian army from the regions of Northern Romania was allowed.

Depending on the situation, two options were proposed for the deployment of our main forces in the West. The first option (the main one) is to the south of Brest-Litovsk, so that with a powerful blow in the directions of Lublin and Krakow and further to Breslau (Bratislav), at the first stage of the war, Germany is cut off from the Balkan countries, depriving it of its most important economic bases and decisively influencing the Balkan countries " regarding their participation in the war. The second option is to the north of Brest-Litovsk with the task of defeating the main forces of the German army within East Prussia and capturing the latter.

On October 5, the strategic deployment plan was reviewed by Stalin, who made significant adjustments to it. He believed that in the event of war Germany would try to direct its main efforts not to the center of the front that would then arise along the line of the Soviet-German border, but to the southwest, in order, first of all, to seize from us the richest industrial, raw materials and agricultural regions. . In accordance with this, the General Staff was instructed to revise the plan, providing for the concentration of the main grouping of our troops in the southwestern direction . and further to Breslau.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, it was decided to develop another - "northern" - option. According to it, the main grouping of Soviet troops was to be deployed in the zone of the Western and North-Western fronts. Needless to say, in all variants, the plans of the General Staff in the event of aggression provided for a quick retaliatory strike, a transition to a counteroffensive and the defeat of the enemy.

Hitler's intentions could not be unraveled. It should be noted that he spoke about the organization of the "Eastern campaign" in June 1940, during a visit to the headquarters of Army Group "A", and on July 21, the Fuhrer informed the commanders of the branches of the armed forces of his intention to "solve the Russian problem by an offensive" and demanded to submit to him considerations upcoming operation. The headquarters of the main command of the Ground Forces prepared the first drafts of the plan for the "eastern campaign" by the end of July. The main idea of the plan was the defeat of the Soviet Union by one

¹⁵⁸ Cit. by: Vasilevsky A.M. The work of a lifetime. M., 2002. S. 100.

¹⁵⁹ See: Anfilov V.A. Terrible summer of 1941. M., 1995. S. 63.

crushing blow. The most important factor in masking the planned campaign was to be the Seelewe plan - a landing operation in the British Isles. In July, the German leadership launched the Otto program, which provided for the expansion of the capacity of railways and highways from Germany to the western border of the USSR. On August 9, the directive of the Supreme High Command was approved on the transfer to the territory of Poland and East Prussia of more than 30 divisions, a number of corps directorates and the headquarters of the 18th Army. From August, the German Air Force began a systematic massive bombardment of London and other English cities, which lasted for 10 months (the so-called "Battle

of England"). At the same time, a war was unfolding at sea ("Battle of the Atlantic") Great Britain to ask for peace. Since September 1940, German troops began to concentrate in Romania, in the same month they appeared in Finland. September 27 in Berlin, Germany, Italy and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact. On October 13, German Foreign Minister Ribbentrop invited Stalin to take part in the division of spheres of influence. A

meeting on this issue with the participation of Molotov was held in Berlin in November, but due to the advancement of mutually unacceptable conditions, it was not successful. After the failure of the negotiations, the leadership of Nazi Germany accelerated preparations for the "Eastern campaign", the beginning of which was originally scheduled for May 1, 1941. On December 18, 1940, A. Hitler signed Directive No. 21 under the code name "Option" Barbarossa "" ("Barbarossa Fall") to deploy military operations against the Soviet Union. The goals were unambiguous: "to destroy the life force of Russia", to liquidate the socialist state, to exterminate millions of Soviet people, and to turn the survivors into slaves of the Reich. The defeat of the Soviet Union was supposed to be inflicted

in the course of a lightning war - "blitzkrieg" - even before the war against England was over. The idea was to split the front of the main forces of the Red Army concentrated in the western part of Russia with fast and deep strikes from powerful mobile groups north and south of the Pripyat swamps, and, using this breakthrough, destroy the disunited groupings of Soviet troops. At the same time, it was planned to destroy the main forces of the Red Army to the west of the Western Dvina and Dnieper lines, preventing their withdrawal into the interior of the country. In the future, it was planned to take possession of the main strategic objects - Moscow, Leningrad, the Central Industrial Region, Donbass and reach the Arkhangelsk, Volga, Astrakhan line. "The ultimate goal of the campaign is to create a defensive barrier against Asiatic Russia along the Volga-Astrakhan line." Alas, the General Staff did not have data on the plans of potential opponents either in September 1940, when a report on the strategic deployment of the USSR Armed Forces was being prepared, or later, when a meeting of the highest command staff of the Red Army and major operational-strategic map games were held. The most serious real information about the impending threat was a telegraphic report from Berlin received by the Chief Intelligence

Directorate of the General Staff on December 29:

"A source ... said that he learned from highly informed military circles that Hitler had given the order to prepare for war with the USSR. War will be declared in March 1941. A task was given to verify and clarify this

information. Military attaché."160 Thus, the basis of the missions of the operational-strategic

games conducted under the leadership of People's Commissar of Defense S.K. Timoshenko became the considerations set forth in the report of September 18, while the true intentions of future opponents assumed a different scenario of military operations. At the same time, Zhukov, who played leading roles during the games, notes the serious and thoughtful preparation of the General Staff for this event: all the materials of the games reflected the latest actions of the Nazi troops in Europe. During the first game on January 2–6, the "Eastern" (North-Western Front) was commanded by General D.G. (war) - G.K. Zhukov. Under the terms of the game,

the "Western" in alliance with the "North-Western", "Northern" and "South-Western" opposed the "Eastern". They preempted the "Eastern" in deployment and on July 15, 1941 launched an offensive. Why did the offensive of the mock enemy begin on July 15? The Soviet leadership considered this period the most likely start of a German attack on the USSR.

The main attack of the "Western", having a significant advantage in forces and means, was delivered south of Brest in the direction of Vladimir-Volynsky, Tarnopol. To the north of Deblin to the Baltic Sea, the "Western", united in the Eastern and North-Eastern fronts, in the interests of the main attack, went on the offensive with the task of defeating the Beostok-Volkovysk and Kaunas groups of the "Eastern" and by the end of the conditional date, August 15, to reach the line Baranovichi, Dvinsk, Riga.

The troops of the North-Eastern Front of the "Western", having crossed the state border, advanced 70-120 kilometers deep, but under the counterattacks of the "Eastern", they began to retreat to a line prepared in advance for defense, having the task of holding back the offensive of the "Eastern" before the reserves approached. In turn, the North-Western Front of the "Eastern", having repelled the offensive of the "Western", went to the line of the state border and received the task of defeating the "Western" in East Prussia. To its right, the Northern Front was to go on the offensive in order to defeat the troops that were unsuccessfully advancing on Leningrad. On the left, the Western Front, providing the operation of the Northwestern Front with an offensive against Warsaw, was supposed to reach the Vistula River. Having assessed the situation, Zhukov, firmly relying on the fortified areas and borders of East Prussia and

preventing the enemy from invading the territory of the "Western", decided to continue concentrating suitable reserves and at the same time deliver short blows in order to exhaust the enemy, and then go on the general offensive and go to the line Minsk, Dvinsk, Riga.

160 Cit. Quoted from: Military Historical Journal. 1992. No. 2. S. 36.

Considering that the front of the "Eastern" had acquired a general superiority over the "Western", Pavlov decided to defeat them before the approach of the enemy's reserves. At first, the attacking strikes of the "Eastern" were successful, but then the situation changed. Having pulled up the reserves, Zhukov formed a large grouping of troops and broke through the front of the "Eastern" with a powerful blow. At the same time, the forces of the "Eastern", who crossed the Western Bug, were defeated by a counterattack, and then another large enemy grouping was surrounded and destroyed. About 20 more rifle divisions and four tank brigades of the "Eastern" by the time the first game ended were under the threat of complete encirclement and defeat.

During the second game, Zhukov's role changed - now he commanded the Southwestern Front of the "Eastern". Under the terms of the second game, two fronts were now operating on the side of the "Western" - the Southern and the South Eastern. The troops of the Southern Front were led by F.I. Kuznetsov (commander of the troops of the Baltic Special Military District), the South Eastern Front - by D.G. Pavlov. According to the legend of the game, the "Western" in alliance with the "South-Western" and "South" began a war against the "Eastern", going on the offensive on the two fronts mentioned. And again, Zhukov

demonstrated remarkable operational talent, striving first of all to hit the enemy in parts, preventing the connection of his strike groups. Skillfully concentrating his own forces, striking at the junctions of opposing formations, using false maneuvers, he eventually divided the armies of the "Western" into separate operational groups and prepared an impressive blow of strategic importance.

The games brought undoubted benefits to its participants. The military historian P.N. large mobile formations in cooperation with aviation."161

But the beginning of the Great Patriotic War showed that in January 1941, the operational-strategic link of the command staff of the Red Army played on the cards such a variant of military operations that was not planned by the real "Western", that is, Germany. Most of the participants in the games led formations in them, regardless of what positions they actually held at the beginning of 1941.

It is curious that from November 29 to December 7, 1940, a military game was held at the General Staff of the German Land Forces under the leadership of the first quartermaster, Major General F. Paulus. At this game, specific developments for the plan of war with the Soviet Union were already tested. At the first stage, the invasion of German troops into the border zone of the USSR was played out, and "a discussion of operational capabilities after reaching the first operational goal" was held.¹⁶²

161 Ibid. 1993. No. 8. S. 33.

162 Paulus. Ich stehe hier auf Befehl! Frankfurt am Main, 1960. S. 199.

their advance to the line Minsk, Kiev, and on the third - beyond this line.¹⁶³ The results of the game were discussed on December 13 with the highest command staff and taken into account in the final version of the Barbarossa plan. But ... as the people say, aren't we

all strong with a "hind" mind, comparing the strategic miscalculations of the Soviet leadership with the purposeful movement of the German military machine that has gained momentum? Let's not forget that at that time the military-political and strategic initiative unconditionally belonged to Germany, which felt like a cat among mice surrounded by European countries. And it is quite possible that the conference and the subsequent operational-strategic games of the senior command staff of the Red Army had

more significant results than those that historians talk about. They gave us Zhukov. They gave us a commander who was ahead of others in military thinking, who caught and accepted irreversible changes in modern strategy and operational art faster than others. The analysis of the games was carried out by Stalin. This time he was clearly out of sorts and uttered two or three harsh remarks to the speaker, Chief of the General Staff Meretskov. He obviously shied away and began to stray. Stalin was

annoyed by the failure of the "Eastern" in the first game and Meretskov's explanation that the "Western" at the beginning of the game had a great advantage, especially in tanks and aircraft. According to Zhukov's memoirs, Stalin stopped him: "Where do you get such a ratio? Do not forget that in war it is important not only the arithmetic majority, but also the skill of commanders and troops. Meretskov replied that he knew this, but the quantitative and qualitative balance of forces and means in a war also plays an important role, especially in a modern war, for which Germany has long been preparing and already has significant combat experience. After making a few more sharp

remarks, Stalin asked: "Who wants to speak?" People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko spoke. He reported on the operational-tactical growth of commanders, chiefs of staff of military districts, on the undoubted benefits of the meeting and the military-strategic game. Then Colonel-General D.G. Pavlov asked to speak. He began with an overview of the meeting, but Stalin interrupted him and asked: "What are the reasons for the unsuccessful actions of the troops of the 'red' (we are talking about the 'eastern' - V.D.) side? Pavlov tried to get away with a joke, saying that this happens in war games. Stalin clearly did not like this joke, and he remarked: "The commander of the district troops must master the art of war, be able to find the right solutions in any conditions, which you did not succeed in the game you played." Then, apparently losing interest in Pavlov's speech, he asked: "Who else wants to speak?"

Zhukov asked for the floor. Noting the great value of such games for the growth of the operational-strategic level of the high command, he suggested that they be held more often, despite the complexity of the organization. To improve the military training of commanders and staff members

¹⁶³ See: Halder F. War diary. M., 1962. T. 2. S. 267, 271, 287.

districts and armies, Georgy Konstantinovich considered it necessary to begin the practice of large-scale command and staff field exercises with communications equipment under the leadership of the People's Commissar of Defense and the General Staff. Then he touched upon the construction of fortified regions in Belarus. "In my opinion, in Belarus, fortified lines (URs) are being built too close to the border, and they have an extremely unfavorable operational configuration, especially in the area of the Bialystok salient," he said. - This will allow the enemy to strike from the area of Brest and Suwalki to the rear of our entire Bialystok grouping. In addition, due to the shallow depth, the URs cannot hold out for a long time, as they are shot through by artillery fire."164

Molotov asked what exactly Zhukov was proposing. He replied that it would be necessary to build fortified areas somewhere deeper, further from the state border. This was sharply objected by Voroshilov, who said that the fortified areas are being built according to the approved plans of the Main Military Council, and the concrete management of the construction is carried out by Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Shaposhnikov. Since the controversy began, Zhukov stopped speaking and sat down.

Stalin, summing up, noted: "The trouble is that we do not have a real chief of the General Staff. Meretskov must be replaced." After that, Stalin said that all the military were free. - recalled Georgy Konstantinovich. —

was silent
Meretskov was undeservedly offended by the fact that he was silent. KA Meretskov
at the reception. Silent park. All of us, the commanders, were silent.
he worked with K.A. Meretskov in the harshness of I.V. Stalin. For a long time
Belarusian Special Military District, where he was the chief of staff of the district, when
commander of the rank I.P. Uborevich was the 1st head of the district. appreciated K.A.
Meretskov as a hardworking, knowledgeable and

experienced worker" 165

Meretskov himself recalls: "I was asked to describe the course of the December gathering of senior officers and the January operational game. All took 15-20 minutes. When I got to the game, I managed to dwell only on the actions of the enemy, after which the analysis actually ended, as Stalin interrupted me and began to ask questions. Their essence boiled down to an assessment of intelligence information about the German army received in recent months in connection with an analysis of its operations in Western and Northern Europe. However, my considerations, based on data about

my troops and intelligence, did not impress. Then the time allotted to me expired, and the analysis was interrupted. N.F. Vatutin tried to take the floor. But Nikolai Fedorovich was not given it. JV Stalin turned to the People's Commissar of Defense. S.K. Timoshenko did not support me.

None of the military leaders present asked for the floor. Stalin walked around the office, stopped, was silent and said: "Comrade Timoshenko asked to appoint Comrade Zhukov as Chief of the General Staff. Let's agree!".

Zhukov writes that the decision to appoint him chief of the General Staff

164 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 294.

165 Ibid. S. 296.

he learned from Stalin the day after summing up the strategic game. Not knowing what to answer, Zhukov remained silent. From the expression on Stalin's face, he realized that it was useless to object, and, taking a deep breath, he said: "Well, if I don't make a good chief of the General Staff, I will ask to return to duty."

As a result of the December meeting of the senior command staff of the Red Army and the January operational-strategic games, an order was issued by the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR "On combat and political training of troops for the 1941 academic year." Perhaps for the first time, it was so simply and clearly explained in it what it means to ensure the approximation of everyday training to combat reality: to teach the troops only what is needed in the war, and only as it is done in the war.¹⁶⁶ Georgy Konstantinovich did not immediately

take up his duties Chief of the General Staff. He had to hand over the cases, transfer the command of the district. In addition, even earlier he planned to hold meetings of army commanders, corps and division commanders in Kyiv.

Speaking to the participants of the training camp, Zhukov noted that the main potential enemy of the Soviet Union was fascist Germany, whose military successes stunned the whole world. Despite the fact that the German army in the West met almost no resistance, it is necessary to carefully study its experience and draw appropriate conclusions. "The main role in the victories of the fascist army was played by aviation, armored and motorized formations in their close cooperation. It was they who, with their powerful blows, ensured the swiftness of the offensive of the German troops. The German army is well equipped and has acquired solid combat experience. It will not be easy to fight such an opponent. Previously, we believed that if we had to break through the enemy defenses, one and a half, in extreme cases, double superiority over the enemy in the main attack sector would be enough. At the Moscow meeting, another opinion prevailed: it is necessary to ensure such superiority in forces not only in the sector of the main attack, but also in the entire offensive zone of the front troops. ¹⁶⁷ Georgy Konstantinovich noted that many commanders continue to view modern war the old operational-tactical norms do not understand the significance of the massive use of new types of troops - aviation and tanks. At the same time,

he warned against the desire to start a complete revolution in military affairs. "These comrades forget that any, even the most daring plans, must be based on real possibilities. When planning measures in case of war, we cannot proceed from what our army will have in the future. What if the war starts now? We must be realistic and make plans based on the forces and means that we have today."¹⁶⁸

After the completion of the training, Zhukov left. "At the station, he was escorted by colleagues in the district administration, representatives of the party and Soviet

¹⁶⁶ TsAMO. F. 2. Op. 920. D. 1. L. 42.

¹⁶⁷ Op. by: Bagramyan I.X. Thus the war began. S. 44.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. pp. 44–45.

organizations of the city," Bagramyan recalled. - It was felt that Zhukov managed to gain deep respect in Kyiv. He was visibly moved. A slight smile never left his usually stern face."¹⁶⁹ The war was less than five months away.

Chapter VI. What is delay like?

It is no coincidence that they say: the General Staff is the brain of the army. Only on February 1, 1941, having accepted cases from Meretskov, did Zhukov fully realize how wide the range of his new duties was. Well, he was not accustomed to working all day and night, and natural health, a tough regimen, and a solid self-discipline developed over the years helped in this. But it is important not to get bogged down in the inevitable daily routine, to save the main forces and time to solve fundamental issues that are vital for the army, for the country. After all, if they did not understand, then they felt: the war is at the threshold. He quickly delved into the main tasks assigned to the General Staff: strategic and operational planning, logistics, development of industry orders for the production of weapons and military equipment, coordination of the activities of all departments of the People's Commissariat of Defense, intelligence management, operational training of senior command personnel, organization of air defense, military topographic service, covert

command and control... The Chief of the General Staff was given the right to independently enter the government to solve defense problems, and Zhukov in his new position had to report to Stalin more than once on certain issues related to strengthening the Armed Forces. What impressions did Georgy Konstantinovich make from these meetings?

"Neither my predecessors, nor report to I.V. Stalin I Not state of the country's With exhaustive completeness had a case of the defense, O our military opportunities And O capabilities of our potential enemy. and briefly listened to the people's commissar or the JV Stalin only occasionally of the General chief Not in the affairs of the war, I will hide, it seemed to us then that more than Staff. defense I.V. Stalin knows he us, understands more deeply the difficulties of the war, we sees further. When did you have to face not less, A And With understood. what is our opinion By about the extraordinary awareness of the military leadership qualities And of I.V. Stalin was erroneous .170

Here is such, to put it mildly, the incomprehensible reaction of the leader to the reports of the high command. But at the same time, Stalin and his entourage showed unacceptable slowness in reworking the current and clearly outdated war plan, which completely ceased to correspond to the situation.

"Hitler took all measures to impress I. Stalin on the Soviet Union, repeatedly assured that IN Germany would thought O his quite loyal attitude To never violate its obligations. And I. And Stalin, - Zhukov considered, - oddly enough, believed these false assurances of Hitler. He believed that if we pursue an extremely cautious policy of unleashing a war, we will carry out the taken IN.

And give no reason to the Germans on trading yourself and other

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. S. 47.

¹⁷⁰ Zhukov G. K. Memoirs and reflections. T. 1. S. 329.

obligations, war can be avoided or, in extreme cases, delayed. This is how the entire Stalinist leadership of the country thought.¹⁷¹ In foreign policy statements, Molotov constantly emphasized the friendly nature of relations with Germany in accordance with the Soviet-German agreements. However, no one seriously clung to the Non-Aggression Pact: both sides had already fully used its potential in their own interests. On Hitler's instructions, the Chief of the General Staff of the Supreme High Command, Field Marshal Keitel, signed on February

15 a special "Directive on disinformation of the enemy." In order to hide the preparations for the operation under the Barbarossa plan, the intelligence and counterintelligence department of the headquarters developed and carried out numerous actions to spread false rumors and information. The movement of troops to the east was presented "in the light of the greatest disinformation maneuver in history to divert attention from the latest preparations for the invasion of England." Topographical materials on England were printed in mass quantities. Interpreters were assigned to the English troops. A "cordon" was being prepared for some areas on the coast of the English Channel, Pas de Calais and in Norway. Information about the imaginary airborne corps was spread. On the coast, false rocket batteries were installed. Information was circulated among the troops in two versions: in the first, that they were going before the invasion of England, in the second, that on vacation language. German formations would be passed through Soviet territory to oppose India. To reinforce the version of the landing in England, special operations were developed under the code names "Shark" and "Harpoon". Propaganda fell upon England in its entirety and ceased its usual attacks on the Soviet Union. As always, diplomats got involved.

In connection with Hitler's decision to expand the scale of Operation Marita (the attack on Greece), changes were made to the plan for Operation Barbarossa on April 7, which provided for the postponement of its start to a later date and the completion of all preparatory measures by approximately June 22, 1941.

Soviet intelligence in February 1941 had data on the concentration of German troops near the borders of the USSR. Stalin also received other information. However, as Zhukov assures, they were not brought to the attention of the Chief of the General Staff. "

As chief of the General Staff, - writes in February 1941, - he accepted this post 1, I.V. Stalin received it personally " I neither once Not was informed He .¹⁷² O intelligence the information that What is it - the habit of analyzing everything and making decisions alone, distrust of the environment, the desire to look more significant than others through awareness and competence? It remains only to guess. Be that as it may, the General Staff experienced a hunger for information, and as you know, the lack of information under certain circumstances is worse than disinformation. In March 1941, the Soviet military attache in Belgrade reported that Germany had refused to attack the British Isles and the nearest

171 Ibid. S. 343.

172 Ibid. S. 362.

the task was "to capture Ukraine and Baku, which should be carried out in April-May of the current year."¹⁷³ The intention of the Germans to seize Ukraine was also mentioned in a message from Berlin from the Corsican agent. On March 20, the head of the Main Intelligence Directorate, General F.I. Golikov, presented to the leadership a report containing information of exceptional importance. This document outlined the options for possible directions of strikes by the Nazi troops during an attack on the Soviet Union. As it turned out later, they reflected the outlines of actions under the Barbarossa plan, and in one of the options, in essence, the essence of this plan was reflected:

"Of the most probable military operations planned against the USSR, the following deserve attention: Option No. 3, according to ... as of February 1941: ... for an attack on the USSR,

it is written in the message, three army groups are being created: the 1st group under the command of General Field Marshal Bock strikes in the direction of Petrograd; the 2nd group under the command of General Field Marshal Rundstedt - in the direction of Moscow and the 3rd group under the command of Field Marshal Leeb in the direction of Kiev. The beginning of the offensive against the USSR is approximately May 20. According to our military attache dated March 14, the report continued, the German major stated: "We are completely changing our plan. We are heading east, to the USSR. We will take grain, coal, oil from the USSR. Then we will be invincible and can continue the war with England and America..." Finally, this document, referring to a message from the military attache from

Berlin, states that "the start of hostilities against the USSR should be expected between May 15 and June 15, 1941."¹⁷⁴ However, the conclusions made by Golikov from the information given in the report essentially depreciated all their significance and misled I.V. Stalin: "1. Based on all the above statements and possible options for action in the spring of this year, I believe that the most possible date for the start of actions against the USSR will be the moment after the victory over England or after the conclusion of an honorable peace for Germany with her. **2. Rumors and documents that speak of the inevitability of a war against the USSR this spring must be regarded as disinformation coming from British and even, perhaps, German intelligence.**

However, the leadership of the General Staff also did not know anything about this report - like many other intelligence information, it went to Stalin directly, bypassing the People's Commissar of Defense and the Chief of the General Staff.

"JV Stalin knew much more than the military leadership. But even the lines of military intelligence could see an from what I report to him By unconditional increase, he, having - How rightly considers Zhukov, - He overestimated his false path threats of war, this they made possible, moved on Not And . This, of course, could not but be reflected in a complete analysis of the situation. On April 4, 1941

¹⁷³ See: Military Historical Journal. 1992. No. 2. S. 37.

¹⁷⁴ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 364.

the total increase in German troops from the Baltic Sea to Slovakia, according to General F.I. Golikov, was 5 infantry and 6 tank divisions. In total, there were 72–73 divisions against the USSR. To this number should be added the German troops stationed in Romania, in the amount of 9 infantry and one motorized division.”¹⁷⁵

On April 10, intelligence data were reported to Stalin about the alleged start of German military operations against the USSR at the end of June. G.K. Zhukov in 1956, preparing for a speech at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, noted that I.V. Stalin and the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars V.M. Molotov knew about the concentration of German troops near the Soviet borders. As an example, Georgy Konstantinovich referred to his report sent to Molotov:

“I am reporting on mass violations of the state border by German aircraft for the period from April 1 to 10, 1941. In total, 47 border violations were carried out during this period.

As can be seen from the attached map, violations in the prevailing mass is carried out:

- a) on the border with the Baltic Special Military District and especially in the districts of Libava, Memel and Kovno;
- b) in the Lviv direction on the section of the Sokal state border, Przemysl.

Separate cases of violation of the state border were made in the directions to Grodno, Bialystok, Kovel and Lutsk, as well as on the state border with Romania. Flights of German aircraft were carried out to a depth of 90–

200 km from the state border by both fighters and bombers. This suggests that the Germans are doing both visual reconnaissance and photography. I ask you to report this question to Comrade Stalin and accept

possible activities.

Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army

Army General Zhukov April 11, 1941

G.

No. 503 727.176

Georgy Konstantinovich noted that no real measures were taken either on this report or on a number of others. Despite intelligence data about the concentration of about 160 fully combat-ready Wehrmacht divisions near the Soviet borders, about a possible enemy attack on June 15, 22 or 25, 1941, the Soviet leadership believed that in a situation close to the victorious end of the war with England, Hitler would not go to the disastrous for Germany a war on two fronts. In addition, Stalin believed that the British government was extremely interested in provoking a German war against the USSR. Therefore, he assessed as provocative the memorandum of the British government dated April 18, 1941 (it said that if the war dragged on, Great Britain might come to the idea of ending it on German

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. S. 341.

¹⁷⁶ Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 564.

conditions) and a letter delivered to him on April 19 by W. Churchill containing a warning about Germany's intensive preparations for an attack on the USSR. In February 1941, the General Staff

developed the latest version of the mobilization plan, which received the name MP-41. According to it, in case of war, it was planned to deploy 8 fronts, 29 armies, 15 districts, 62 rifle and 29 mechanized corps, 196 rifle and mountain rifle and 13 cavalry divisions, 8 aviation and 5 airborne corps, 94 corps artillery regiments, 74 reserve artillery regiments Main command. After the approval of the plan, Zhukov sent directives to the districts in March explaining the procedure for developing and ensuring a mobilization plan. He set the deadline for working out plans on the ground until May 1, and then postponed it to July 20. Unfortunately, before the start of the war, the districts and troops were not able to work out in detail the entire complex of tasks facing them.

By March 11, 1941, an updated plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces in the West and East was prepared.¹⁷⁷ According to the General Staff, Germany had deployed 225 infantry, 20 tank and 15 motorized divisions, 20,000 field guns, 10,000 tanks, and up to 15,000 aircraft. Of this number, 76 divisions were concentrated near the borders of the USSR, including 6 tank and 7 motorized divisions, and about 35 divisions in Romania and Bulgaria. Provided that the war with England ended, it was assumed that Germany would send up to 200 divisions against the USSR, of which up to 165 infantry, 20 tank and 15 motorized. In total, taking into account the troops of Finland, Romania and Hungary, 268 divisions, 20,050 guns, 10,810 tanks and 11,600 aircraft could be deployed on the western borders. In the East, Japan, together with Manchukuo, can deploy up to 60 infantry divisions, 1 cavalry division, 27 mixed and 6 cavalry brigades, 1,200 tanks and tankettes, 850 heavy guns, 3,000 aircraft. But again, as before in the strategic deployment plan of September 18, 1940, it was noted that the General Staff did not have documentary data on the operational plans of potential adversaries. Therefore, in many

respects already well-established assumptions were made: "Germany will most likely deploy its main forces in the southeast from Sedlec to Hungary in order to capture Berdichev, Kiev will be accompanied by Ukraine. This strike, apparently, was an auxiliary strike in the north from East Prussia to Dvinsk and Riga, or concentric strikes from Suwalki and Brest to Volkovysk-Baranovichi. The possibility of Finland's action in the northwest, the Romanian army in the south was not ruled out. It was expected that of the lower reaches of the Western Bug River to Germany would deploy: north the Baltic Sea - 30-40 infantry, 3-5 tank, 2-4 motorized divisions, up to 3570 guns and up to 2000 tanks; south of the Western Bug River to the border with Hungary - up to 110 infantry, 14 tank, 10 motorized divisions, up to 11.5 thousand guns, 7.5 thousand tanks and most of their aviation. At the same time, the possibility of concentrating the main forces of the German army in East Prussia and in the direction of Warsaw was admitted, in order to deliver and deploy the main attack through Lithuania in

¹⁷⁷ See: Military Historical Journal. 1992. No. 2. S. 18–22.

direction to Riga or to Kovno, Dvinsk. In addition, auxiliary concentric strikes from Lomzha and Brest were envisaged, with their subsequent development in the direction of Baranovichi, Minsk. The strategic deployment of the Armed Forces was proposed to be

carried out taking into account the likelihood of military operations on two fronts. The main forces were planned to be deployed in the West and the Finnish front: 171 rifle, 27 motorized rifle, 54 tank and 7 cavalry divisions, 2 separate rifle brigades, 253 aviation regiments. It was noted that "the deployment of the main forces of the Red Army in the West with the grouping of the main forces against East Prussia and in the direction of Warsaw raises serious concerns that the struggle on this front could lead to protracted battles."

It was necessary to have special perseverance in order to convince Stalin to call into service the assigned composition of rifle divisions, which had to be understaffed according to wartime standards. Timoshenko and Zhukov approached Stalin with a request to allow the draft in mid-March. "At first our request was rejected," Zhukov recalled. - We were told that the call of assigned staff of the reserve in such quantities could give the Germans a reason to provoke a war. However, at the end of March, it was decided to call up five hundred thousand soldiers and sergeants and send them to the border military districts for resupplying in order to bring the number of rifle divisions to at least 8,000 people.¹⁷⁸ A few days later, Stalin allowed another 300,000 people - specialists for fortified areas, artillery, engineering troops, signal troops, air defense and the rear service of the air force.

In March 1941, the General Staff completed the development of a mobilization plan for the industry for the production of military products in case of war. Zhukov, together with his deputy V.D. Sokolovsky, introduced him to the chairman of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR K.E. Voroshilov. Time passed, but no decisions were made, and then Zhukov was forced to report personally to Stalin about the absence of an industrial mobilization plan. The draft plan was instructed to consider N.A. Voznesensky, a group of leaders of the people's commissariats and the State Planning Commission, but time still turned out to be lost. Back in February, the commander of the Western Special

Military District, General of the Army Pavlov, sent a report to Stalin, Molotov and Timoshenko, in which he asked for significant funds to be allocated for work on road construction. This problem was of exceptional strategic importance. "I believe that the Western theater of military operations must necessarily be prepared during 1941," Pavlov wrote, "and therefore I consider it absolutely impossible to stretch the construction for several years." However, Pavlov's proposals were treated with restraint. At the end of February, Timoshenko and Zhukov held a meeting of the General Staff on the issue of the state of railways, highways and pound roads. The conclusions were basically the following: the highway network in the western regions of Belarus and Ukraine is in poor condition. Many

¹⁷⁸ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 307.

bridges cannot support the weight of medium tanks and artillery, and country roads require major repairs. "The border railway areas are not well adapted for the mass unloading of troops," General N.F. Vatutin reported. — This is evidenced by the following figures. The German railways going to the Lithuanian border have a capacity of 220 trains per day, while our Lithuanian railway, which goes to the borders of East Prussia, has only 84. The situation is no better on the territory of the western regions of Belarus and Ukraine: here we have almost half as many rail lines than the enemy. The railway troops and construction organizations during 1941 will obviously not be able to carry out the work that needs to be done. Here, the People's Commissar of Defense noticed that in 1940, on the instructions of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the People's Commissariat of Railways developed a seven-year plan for the technical reconstruction of the Western Railways. However, nothing serious has been done so far, except for changing the gauge and elementary work to adapt railway structures for loading and unloading troops and weapons. Something has been done. But it's too late. Very soon, what they were going to build and restore in the western part of the country had to be blown up and destroyed with their own hands.

During the spring of 1941, Zhukov organized a lot of work to increase the emergency supplies of all the western border districts at the expense of state reserves for fuel, food and clothing. The People's Commissar of Defense and the General Staff considered it necessary in the conditions of the impending war to bring material and technical means closer to the troops. The decision is correct. But no one expected what the initial period of the war would turn out to be. After a quick breakthrough of the front, the enemy managed to capture significant material and technical reserves in a short time.

Despite the huge employment, and had to work 15-16 hours a day, Georgy Konstantinovich constantly turned to military theoretical issues, persistently tried to understand what was haunting him in those strategic ideas that had become stronger among the senior command staff. "Military strategy in the prewar period was similarly based on the assertion," he later wrote, "that only offensive actions can defeat the aggressor.

a purely auxiliary role, ensuring that offensive groupings achieve their goals. Not a requirement of modern warfare is the method of training troops. Taking part in strategic games, ^{And that defense will play} corresponded

in some cases and

ⁱⁿ many field exercises, on maneuvers and operationally remember the occasion, so that ^I Not the advancing side would have a set goal. When placed in difficult conditions offensive fulfilled its task, the leadership of the exercise usually resorted to ^{and} did not reach the course of action, the same ^{By} artificial measures that facilitate the fulfillment of the task of the attacking side. In short, our troops are not hard the first days of the war. As for other methods of armed struggle, the operational-strategic scale ^{Not} ^{To}

have always been taught

what they had to face

That they were simply neglected, especially

^{And forms of management}

V

“179

Just as little attention as to defense was given to meeting engagements, retreats, and encirclement engagements. Meanwhile, it was precisely these types of combat operations that in the initial period of the war unfolded very widely and assumed the most fierce character.

"In other words, our troops properly war in difficult conditions, the scale of education of troops, and if and were trained, then only in tactical Not were trained in , Zhukov noted. — with there was a serious error in training. This V was to be paid And behind great sacrifices. For the experience of a number of wars shows that an army that is insufficiently trained in conducting operations in difficult and difficult conditions will inevitably suffer heavy losses in the course of the war itself. A major gap in retraining military science was that we did not draw practical conclusions from the experience of the battles of the initial period of the Second World War in the West. And this V And forced by the Soviet V experience was already evident, a conference of senior officers in

on
And He even discussed December on
1940 "180

Obviously, the decision of the People's Commissar of Defense following the results of the December meeting - "to teach the troops only what is needed in the war, and only as it is done in the war" - remained only a good intention.

There were gaps in the defense capability and combat readiness of the army. And yet, it was not only, and sometimes not so much, Stalin's slowness, reaching the point of unforgivable conservatism. Did anyone from the highest state and military leadership try to convince him of something in order to change the situation, turn the tide of events? It seems not. And here again it is appropriate to return to Zhukov's thoughts: "

Now, after all that has been experienced, critically reflecting on the past, we can say that the country's leadership mistakenly neglected our demands for urgent measures that should have been carried out immediately after the war by Finland, the pre-war period, the military leaders in the pre-war period were not persistent enough in front of I. V. Stalin these issues. By the way, I was convinced that, as during the war, JV Stalin was such a person who if someone was impossible to put sharp questions that could not be opposite, I will say frankly - the statements are not V

I in Not

and with

and even firmly defend their point of view

are true" 181 .

And one more thing needs to be said. All the reasons for the tragic failures in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War in the last decade and a half are usually associated with specific personalities: Stalin, persons (of course, odious) from his entourage, military leaders of the old school, capable of commanding only cavalry. In this regard, I would like to reproduce an episode from Zhukov's memoirs, which has already been mentioned more than once in publications dedicated to the marshal. This refers to the well-known case when Stalin, shortly after Zhukov took office

as chief of the General Staff, invited him with a report to his dacha. When Georgy Konstantinovich arrived, marshals S.K. Timoshenko, G.I. Kulik, members of the Politburo M.I. Kalinin, V.M. Molotov, G.M. Malenkov were already there. saying hello,

180 Ibid. pp. 323–324.

181 Ibid. S. 329.

Stalin asked if Zhukov was familiar with rocket-propelled mortars ("Katyushas"). Zhukov replied that he had only heard about them, but had not seen them. Stalin said that Zhukov should go with Timoshenko, Kulik and Aborenkov to the firing range in the next few days and watch their shooting. And then he asked what state the affairs of the General Staff were in. Zhukov, briefly repeating what he had already reported to the People's Commissar, said that in view of the complexity of the military-political situation, urgent measures must be taken and the shortcomings in the defense of the western borders and in the Armed Forces eliminated in time.

After listening to the report, Stalin invited everyone to dinner and resumed the interrupted conversation. When asked how Zhukov assesses German aviation, he replied: "The Germans have good aviation, their flight personnel have received good combat practice of interacting with the ground forces, as for the materiel, our new fighters and bombers are no worse than the German ones, and perhaps and better. The only pity is that there are very few of them. Tymoshenko added that there is a particular shortage of fighter aircraft. To this, Malenkov threw a remark: "Semyon Konstantinovich thinks more about defensive aviation." The Commissar was silent. In conclusion, Stalin said that it was necessary to think over and work out the priority issues and submit them to the

government for decision. But at the same time, one should proceed from real possibilities and not fantasize about what is currently impossible to provide materially. Returning to the General Staff at night, Zhukov wrote down everything that Stalin said and outlined the issues that would need to be addressed in the first place. These proposals were submitted to the government. I would like to pay attention to Stalin's last words in this conversation. Are we fantasizing too much about the material and economic possibilities of the country in those years, assessing the miscalculations of the leaders?

In early April 1941, Georgy Konstantinovich also had to play a diplomatic role. On the eve of the Soviet government became aware of the secret negotiations in Berlin, Japanese Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka with Ribbentrop and representatives of the highest military circles in Germany. A few days later, Stalin informed Zhukov that Matsuoka would arrive in Moscow and that he should be "kindly" received, as he expressed a desire to meet Zhukov personally. It is not difficult to guess the reasons for such a desire: a high-ranking Japanese official was eager to see a man who managed to deliver a crushing blow to the elite units of the vaunted Kwantung Army at Khalkhin Gol. And if you consider that the former commander of the Russians in battles sadly memorable for the Japanese is now one of the leaders of the Red Army, then it is all the more worth looking at him. The meeting took place. And after her, the Japanese government agreed to sign a treaty of neutrality. The Neutrality Pact between the USSR and Japan was signed on April 13, 1941. Its term was determined for 5 years. It provided that both sides undertake to maintain peaceful and friendly relations with each other, mutually respect the territorial integrity and inviolability of the other side. A special clause stipulated that in the event that one of the contracting parties

parties will be the object of hostilities on the part of third powers, then the other contracting party will remain neutral. The Soviet government understood that the Soviet-Japanese agreement on neutrality would reduce the danger of a Japanese military attack on our country and waging war on two fronts. Of course, it did not give a full guarantee of peace in the Far East, therefore, during the Great Patriotic War, significant forces of the Red Army and Navy were concentrated there.

Solving daily and hourly a lot of questions on which the degree of preparation of the Armed Forces for a possible war depended, Zhukov felt how quickly time was flying, how catastrophically it was not enough. A whole host of problems arose with the construction of fortified areas on the new border, pushed back to the west, using the old SDs. There was not enough UR artillery - new long-term firing points were equipped with obsolete guns, dragging them from the former border fortifications. Some holes were patched up, others were exposed. A lot of strength and nerves had to be given to defending in disputes at the very top the safety and equipment of pillboxes and bunkers that remained in the depths of the territory. Zhukov's firmness and loyalty to the hard-won operational-strategic principles of building defense had an effect. And as we remember, he gave priority to its depth and richness.

On April 8, 1941, the General Staff sent an order to the commanders of the Western and Kiev Special Military Districts, in which they obliged them to carry out a number of measures to create new and use old fortified areas, including the formation of personnel for the departments of fortified areas. A few days later, another directive was sent to the border districts:

“Despite a number of instructions from the General Staff of the Red Army, the installation of casemate weapons in long-term military structures and bringing the structures to combat readiness is carried out at an unacceptably slow pace . The People's Commissar of Defense ordered: 1. All weapons available in the district for fortified areas should be urgently assembled

into military installations and the latter put on alert. 2. In the absence of special weapons, install temporarily (with a simple seal) in the embrasure openings and boxes machine guns on field

machines and, where possible, guns.

3. Bringing structures into combat readiness to be carried out, despite the absence of the rest of the standard equipment of structures, but with the mandatory installation of armored, metal and lattice doors. 4. Organize the proper care and safety of weapons,

installed in buildings.

5. To the head of the Defense Construction Department of the Red Army, immediately send technical instructions to the districts on the installation of temporary weapons in reinforced concrete structures.

Report on the measures taken by 25.4.41 to the General Staff of the Red Army. Chief of

the General Staff of the Red Army General of the Army - G. Zhukov is correct: Head of the Department of Fortified Areas of the General Staff of the Red Army

Major General - S. Shiryaev".¹⁸²

On the instructions of Zhukov, in accordance with the updated strategic deployment plan, A.M. Vasilevsky prepared on April 10 a directive on the operational deployment of troops of the border military districts. In particular, for the Western Special Military District, it was indicated: "The main tasks: with the transition to the offensive of the SWF (South Western Front. - V.D.) - a blow from the left wing of the Western Front in the general direction to Sedlec - Radom, attack from the SWF, defeat the Lublin-Radom grouping of the enemy. The immediate task is to capture Sedlec, Lukov and capture the crossings across the river. Wisla. Develop a plan for the first operation of the 13th and 4th armies and a plan for the defense of the 3rd and 10th armies."¹⁸³ Thus, they still proceeded from the well-established strategic axiom: a) the main threat is in the southwestern direction; b) strike the enemy with a counter blow, immediately go over to the counteroffensive and smash the enemy groupings.

In the second half of April, in order to strengthen the composition of the western border military districts, the formation of 10 artillery anti-tank brigades of the reserve of the High Command and 4 airborne corps began. , two airborne divisions - the conclusion of the Neutrality Pact with Japan played a role. Since the spring, work on the construction of field airfields and concrete runways at permanent airfields has been on a large scale. However, due to the lack of forces and means, it was not possible to complete what was planned for the start of the war. As a result, aviation in some areas was based close to the border. On May 5, 1941, a solemn meeting was held in the Grand Kremlin Palace dedicated to the graduation of commanders who graduated from military academies and military faculties of civilian universities. Stalin addressed the participants. Congratulating the graduates on their graduation, he noted that over the past three or four years a new army had been created, armed with modern military equipment,

and described the changes in individual branches and types of troops. Then Stalin positively assessed the military thought of the German army, which was armed with the latest technology, learned new methods of warfare, and gained a lot of experience. It is a fact that Germany has the best army both in terms of technology and organization. But the Germans are wrong to believe that their army is ideal, invincible. There are no invincible armies. Germany will not be successful under the slogans of aggressive wars of conquest, under the slogans of conquering other countries, subjugating other peoples and states.

At a banquet arranged after the reception of graduates, Stalin, in response to a toast of one of those present for the peaceful Stalinist foreign policy, made an amendment: "Peaceful policy ensured peace in our country. Peace politics is a good thing. For the time being, we carried out a line on the defensive - until we rearmed our

¹⁸² Ibid. pp. 335-336.

¹⁸³ Anfilov V. A. Terrible summer of 1941. S. 64.

army, did not supply the army with modern means of struggle. And now that we have reconstructed our army, saturated it with equipment for modern combat, when we have become strong, now we must move from defense to offensive. In defending our country, we must act offensively. From defense to move on to a military policy of offensive operations. We need to reorganize our education, our propaganda, agitation, our press in an offensive spirit. The Red Army is a modern army, and a modern army is an offensive army.

Stalin's speech and the toasts at the May reception (their full texts were published relatively recently¹⁸⁴) subsequently gave rise to many judgments. We will not take seriously the version that the USSR intended to attack Germany - we already have a good idea of the degree of combat readiness of the Soviet Armed Forces, and the operational-strategic tasks they were solving at that time, and the economic potential, and the military-political situation of the country, so that appreciate the absurdity of such statements.

The point of view of the British journalist A. Werth looks the most balanced. It comes down to the fact that Stalin allegedly warned military "academicians": Germany "in the near future" will be able to attack the USSR. However, the Red Army is not yet ready enough to cope with the German army, and therefore it is necessary to delay its attack on the Soviet Union by all means.¹⁸⁵

Others, for example, Ruhr University professor B. Bonwetsch, believe that Stalin wanted to prepare the country and the army to seize the military initiative from the Wehrmacht. This could be "in the form of a limited pre-emptive strike, as envisaged in the deployment plan of May 15, 1941," but other alternatives could also be considered.¹⁸⁶

On the day when Stalin spoke at a reception in honor of graduates of the military academies, the head of the Main Intelligence Directorate, General Golikov, signed the following message:

"The total number of German troops against the USSR on May 5 reaches 103-107 divisions, including six divisions located in the Danzig and Poznań region. Of this number of divisions in East Prussia - 23-24 divisions; against ZAPOVO - 29 divisions; against KOVO - 31-34 divisions; in Carpathian Ukraine - 4 divisions; in Moldova and Northern Dobruja - 10-11 divisions. (A number of information received about the presence of 18 German divisions in Moldavia alone does not have proper confirmation and requires verification.) In the very composition of the forces concentrated against the USSR, attention

is drawn to the strengthening of tank troops from 9 divisions on April 25 to 12 divisions on May 5; motorized, including the motorized cavalry division, from 7 divisions on April 25 to 8 divisions on May 5; mountain - from 2 divisions to 25

¹⁸⁴ See: I. V. Stalin, "The Modern Army is an Offensive Army." Speech by I.V. Stalin at a reception in the Kremlin to graduates of military academies, May 1941 / Publ. prepared A. A. Pechenkin // Historical archive. 1995. No. 2. S. 23-31

¹⁸⁵ See: A. Werth, *Russia in the War 1941-1945*. M.: 1965. Issue. I: Prelude to War: From the beginning of the invasion before the battle for Moscow. Leningrad epic. pp. 138-139.

¹⁸⁶ See: V. A. Nevezhin, *Offensive War Syndrome*. M., 1997. S. 261.

April to 5 divisions on May 5th. In

preparation for the theater of military operations, construction of all types is being intensively carried out. The second railway lines of strategic routes are being built in Slovakia, the Protectorate, Romania, especially those leading from east to west.

Intensified construction of warehouses for fire supplies, fuel and other types of military support. The network of airfields and landing sites is expanding. In addition, along the entire border, from the Baltic Sea to Hungary, there is an eviction from the border zone of the population.

The Romanian government has given a secret order to evacuate institutions and valuables from Moldova, which in fact is already being carried out. Oil companies have been ordered to build concrete walls around fuel tanks.

Intensive exercises are being carried out on air defense of cities, the construction of bomb shelters and experimental mobilizations.

Reinforced reconnaissance by German officers of our border is being carried out. From Vienna it was

reported about the call of reserve officers who knew Galicia and Poland. Due to the liberated

forces from Yugoslavia, a reserve group of the main command is being created on the territory of the Czech Republic and Moravia, thereby restoring the grouping that was there before the start of the war with Yugoslavia, with a total strength of up to 10 divisions.

Conclusions: 1. In two months, the number of German divisions in the border zone against the USSR increased by 37 divisions (from 70 to 107). Of these, the number of tank divisions increased from 6 to 12 divisions. With the Romanian and Hungarian armies, this will amount to about 130 divisions.

2. It is necessary to reckon with the further strengthening of the German concentration against the USSR at the expense of the liberated troops in Yugoslavia with their grouping in the area of the Protectorate and on the territory of Romania.

3. A further strengthening of German troops on the territory of Norway is likely, the North Norwegian grouping of which in the future can be used against the USSR through Finland and by sea.

4. The available forces of German troops for operations in the Middle East at this time are expressed in 40 divisions, of which 25 in Greece and 15 in Bulgaria. For the same purposes, up to two parachute divisions are concentrated with their probable use in Iraq."187 On May 6, 1941, I.V. conveys:

The Soviet citizen Bozer (a Jew, a former Lithuanian citizen) informed our assistant morattashe that, according to one German officer from Hitler's headquarters, the Germans were preparing an invasion of the USSR through Finland, the Baltic states and Romania by May 14. At the same time, powerful air raids on Moscow and Leningrad and parachute landings in frontier centers are planned.

187 Op. Quoted from: Military Historical Journal. 1992. No. 2. S. 39.

An attempt to find out the original source of information and expand this information has not yet yielded results, since Bozer evaded this. Work with him and verification of information continues.

I believe that the information is false and was deliberately sent along this channel so that it would reach our Government and check how the USSR would react to it.”¹⁸⁸ According to Zhukov, not quite reliable

information was presented to Moscow by the USSR ambassador to Germany, Dekanozov. He not only sent Stalin information about the absence of a threat of attack, but on the eve of the war he allowed the families of many employees of the embassy and trade mission to come to Berlin, who were arrested on the night of June 22 and sent to the Gestapo. It is difficult to judge whether the statement of Georgy Konstantinovich is true or not in this case, but here the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs Beria wrote to Stalin on the eve of the war the following: Hitler's attack on the USSR. He said that this “attack” would begin tomorrow ... But I and my people, Iosif Vissarionovich, firmly remember your wise plan: in 1941, Hitler will not attack us.

On May 8, 1941, TASS denied rumors about the concentration of Soviet troops on the western borders. The next day, the USSR severed diplomatic relations with the emigrant governments of Belgium, Norway and Yugoslavia, and on May 12 recognized the pro-German regime in Iraq. These days, to Zhukov's question about whether it is possible to believe the official propaganda of Germany, that such a mass of troops is being prepared under our noses to attack England, Golikov answered not quite confidently: “It's hard to believe it ... But Comrade Stalin thinks so.” Having released Golikov, Zhukov summoned Vatutin and Vasilevsky. When the generals entered the office, he led them to a map lying on a huge table and said: “Here is the latest data on the concentration of German troops. It becomes obvious that these forces are concentrating at the borders to conduct combat operations against us. Based on this, it is necessary to accelerate the implementation of our strategic deployment plan, prepare new proposals for the government to take decisive countermeasures.”

Georgy Konstantinovich, based on the requirements of the regulations to attack the enemy, wherever he was, intended, together with the People's Commissar of Defense, to go to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars with a proposal to deliver a preemptive strike. A.M. Vasilevsky was instructed to develop a draft “Considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies”.

On May 13, the General Staff sent a directive to the districts on the beginning of the advance of troops to the west from the internal districts. From the Urals, the 22nd Army went to the Velikiye Luki region; from the Volga Military District to the Gomel region - the 21st Army; from the North Caucasian Military District to the area of Belaya Tserkov - the 19th Army; from the Kharkov Military District to the line of the Western Dvina - the 25th Rifle Corps; from Transbaikalia to Ukraine to the Shepetovka region - the 16th Army. In total, in May it was transferred from

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

internal military districts closer to the western borders 28 rifle divisions and four army directorates. However, the divisions consisted of 8-9 thousand people each and did not have the military equipment fully provided for by the state. On May 14, the People's Commissar of Defense ordered the

early graduation of cadets from military schools and immediately send them to the troops. Directives were sent to the commanders of the troops of the border military districts, which required "to cover the mobilization, concentration and deployment of troops" to develop detailed plans for the defense of the state border, airborne and air defense.¹⁸⁹ The Western Special Military District was to develop these plans by May 20, Leningradsky and Kiev Special - by May 25, Baltic Special - by May 30. The following tasks were set as defense tasks: to prevent the invasion of the ground and air enemy, the landing of his air and sea assault forces; to cover the mobilization, concentration and deployment of their troops. No offensive tasks were assigned to the troops of the western border military districts. Instead, they envisaged defense to the entire operational depth, on a strategic scale - up to the distant approaches to Moscow. The directives contained instructions for the evacuation, mining and undermining of some important objects.

One cannot but agree with those historians who believe that the measures prescribed by the directives of the People's Commissar of Defense refute the allegations that "the Soviet Union was persistently preparing for armed aggression against Germany."¹⁹⁰ not only a preemptive strike, but even crossing the state border without the permission of the High Command.

On May 15, Vasilevsky completed the development of an updated version of the "Considerations on the Plan for the Strategic Deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union" entrusted to him by Zhukov. The document was written by hand, addressed to Stalin and signed neither by Timoshenko nor Zhukov. Despite this, there is an opinion in the scientific and historical press that it should "be called Zhukov's plan, because military planning was part of Zhukov's functions."¹⁹¹ The main and new thing in these considerations is the idea of a preemptive strike. The document indicated that Germany kept her army mobilized, with rears deployed, and was in a position to warn us of deployment and deliver a surprise attack. "In order to prevent this, I consider it necessary in no case to give the initiative to action to the German command, to preempt the enemy in deployment and to attack the German army at the moment when it is in the stage of

¹⁸⁹ See: The end of the global lie. Operational plans of the western border military districts in 1941 testify: the USSR was not preparing for an attack on Germany // Military History Journal. 1996. No. 2. S. 2-15; No. 3, pp. 4-17; No. 4, pp. 2-17; No. 5, pp. 2-15; No. 6. P. 2-7.

¹⁹⁰ See: Military Historical Journal. 1996. No. 2. S. 4.

¹⁹¹ Bezymensky L.A. On the "Zhukov plan" of May 15, 1941 // New and latest story. 2000. No. 3. S. 60.

deployment and will not have time to organize the front and the interaction of the military

branches. Stalin not only rejected the proposal for a preemptive strike, but also responded with a categorical refusal to the requests of Timoshenko and Zhukov to be allowed to put the troops of the border districts on alert, accusing them of trying to provoke Germany to attack, to give Hitler a pretext for aggression. Later, Timoshenko told General of the Army N.G.

Lyashchenko about this episode: Stalin "went up to Zhukov and started yelling at him: "Are you here to scare us with war or do you want war, do you not have enough awards or titles?" Zhukov lost his temper and was taken away to another room. Stalin returned to the table and rudely said: "This is all Timoshenko, he sets everyone up for war, they should shoot him, but I know him as a good warrior since the civil war." Timoshenko replied: "You told everyone that the war is inevitable, at a meeting with graduates of the academies." Stalin, addressing the members of the Politburo, reacted as follows: "You see, Timoshenko is healthy and has a big head. And the brains, apparently, are small ... I said this for the people, you need to raise their vigilance, and you need to understand that Germany will never go to war with Russia alone. This you must understand." He left, but soon returned and said: "If you tease the Germans at the border, move troops without our permission, then heads will roll, keep in mind."¹⁹² On May 16, Stalin ordered his secretary A.N. Poskrebyshev to call G.K. Zhukov. "Stalin was very angry with my report and instructed me to convey," recalled Georgy Konstantinovich, "that I would no longer write such notes" for the prosecutor "that the chairman of the

Council of People's Commissars was more aware of the prospects for our relations with Germany than the chief of the General Staff, that the Soviet Union still has enough time to prepare for the decisive battle with fascism. And the implementation of my proposals would only play into the hands of the enemies of Soviet power."¹⁹³ The draft plan dated May 15, 1941, some researchers tend to assess as "aggressive". The majority, for example, M.A. Gareev, deny this, especially since the plan was not approved and there was no political decision regarding a preventive war against Germany. casualties at the start of the war. It is hardly worth talking about the possible political damage in this case, as

some authors do - under all possible circumstances it would be incomparable with the losses that we have suffered. However, let's not forget the golden rule: history does not tolerate the subjunctive mood.

Zhukov himself puts an end to this story. In a conversation with military historian V.A. Anfilov, he remarked: "It is good that Stalin did not agree with us. Otherwise, we would get something similar to Kharkov in

¹⁹² Ibid. pp. 61–62.

¹⁹³ Op. Quoted from: Svetlishin N.A. Steep steps of fate. Khabarovsk, 1992, pp. 57–58.

¹⁹⁴ See: War and Politics, 1939-1941. M., 1999. S. 274.

1942". From this self-critical statement, we can conclude that, putting forward the generally sound idea of a preemptive strike, Zhukov, firstly, did not fully represent the highest degree of readiness of the German troops for a war against the USSR, and secondly, did not expect that the war would be launched so suddenly.

At the end of May, an expanded meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks was held, at which the state of the country's preparation for defense was discussed. Zhukov was instructed to make a report on this issue. His speech allows us to present a complete picture of the state of affairs in the Armed Forces a little over three weeks before the start of the war.

First of all, he emphasized the urgency of conducting a general mobilization in the country, substantiating this with alarming figures: out of 170 divisions and 2 brigades in the border districts, 19 divisions have a strength of 5-6 thousand people (wartime staff - 14.5 thousand), 7 cavalry divisions - in an average of 6 thousand, 144 divisions have 8-9 thousand people each. In the interior districts, most divisions are kept on reduced staffs, while many rifle divisions have only just begun to form. The armament of troops with KV and T-34 tanks is proceeding at an extremely slow pace - they began to arrive only in the second half of 1940, mainly in

armored schools and in the troops of border districts. At the same time, some tank factories are not fulfilling their plans.

Understanding perfectly well what forces in modern warfare play the main striking role, Zhukov drew attention to the problem of mechanized formations: of the 20 corps planned for formation, only 9 have been created so far. - about 32 thousand tanks. However, I had to state: there is simply nowhere to get such a number of cars in one year. The training of personnel for mechanized formations also lags significantly behind.

The military artillery of the border districts has been equipped, mainly to standard standards, while the formation of 27 artillery regiments and 10 artillery anti-tank brigades of the reserve of the High Command is underway. At the same time, "The Main Artillery Directorate underestimates such a powerful rocket weapon as the BM-13 ("Katyusha"). It is necessary, Comrade Stalin, to immediately take a decision on their urgent serial production. Everything possible must be done so that the troops receive this formidable weapon as soon as possible. The production of 82-mm and 120-mm mortars needs to be significantly accelerated. So far, they are coming to the units in obviously insufficient numbers. The report emphasized that the most acute issue is the provision of military units with artillery shells and mines, primarily for the latest artillery systems. There was a huge shortage of modern means of communication in the troops; in fact, there were no mobilization and emergency supplies of communication equipment. For example, the troops of the Western Special Military

District were provided with radio stations only by 27 percent, the Kiev Special - by 30, the Baltic Special - by 52. network, radio and broadcast network in the proper order. without good

established communications, the armed forces will not be able to fight successfully."

The most important problem is the construction of fortified lines along the state border, the condition of highways and dirt roads, and railway lines. By the end of May 1941, 2,500 reinforced concrete structures were built on the western border, of which 1,000 were armed with UR artillery, and the remaining 1,500 were armed only with machine guns. "The construction of fortified areas has not been completed, and from this side the new border is extremely vulnerable," Zhukov said. "In this regard, I consider it my duty to declare that the disarmament of the fortified regions on our old border, undertaken on the proposals of Comrades Kulik, Shaposhnikov and Zhdanov, is clearly erroneous. They might still be useful."

Here Stalin interrupted Zhukov: "Do you think that we will retreat to the old border?" And Voroshilov added: "Comrade Zhukov here clearly overestimates the future enemy and underestimates our forces." To which Zhukov replied: "Everything happens in war, Comrade Stalin. I'm used to always preparing for the worst. Then there are no surprises. As for Comrade Voroshilov's remark, his underestimation of the enemy already cost our armed forces dearly during the Finnish campaign.

Stalin promised to think about whether it was worth disarming the old fortified areas in order to equip the fortified areas on the new border with the weapons removed from them. Recalling this after the war, Zhukov wrote: "But then an incident happened, they managed to disarm some of the URs before the start of the war, but there was not enough time to put these weapons on the new URs."

The combat readiness of the Air Force was of particular concern. From January 1, 1939 to the end of May 1941, the aviation industry produced 17,745 combat aircraft, of which 3,719 were new types. However, approximately 75-80 percent of the total number of aircraft in terms of their flight performance is inferior to the same type of German aircraft. Only about 21 percent of aviation units are equipped with new aircraft. At the same time, the formation of 25 new aviation divisions, as well as 5 airborne corps, for which there is not enough military equipment, has begun. "In general, our air force is in the process of reorganization, transition to a new materiel and retraining of the flight crew. In a year and a half, our aviation can appear in a completely renewed, powerful, combat form. Noting the insufficient equipment of the air defense forces, Zhukov described the state of the Navy: by the end of May 1941, it had more than 600 warships, including 3 battleships, 7 cruisers, 49 destroyers, 218 submarines, and 2529 aircraft. The personnel are well

trained, the commanders of the fleets, flotillas and their headquarters are ready for combat operations. Among the shortcomings, the main one is the lack of due attention to coastal and air defense, mine and torpedo weapons.

It should be noted here that the relationship between Zhukov and the leadership of the Navy did not develop. "Our relations from the first meetings could not be called bad (there were no grounds for this," recalled Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union N.G. Kuznetsov, "but at the same time they did not become as service-friendly as I would like to have for the benefits of closer interaction between the two military leaders.

I do not presume to say from where and by whom Zhukov was inspired by cool relations with the fleet and unwillingness to delve deeper into our maritime affairs. After all, he undoubtedly considered the General Staff (General Staff. - V.D.) the highest operational body of all the Armed Forces, which the sailors understood. I think that at that time, the relatively small fleet (until a large program was implemented) did not arouse much interest in Stalin in the event of an imminent war, and this, apparently, was heard and known by Zhukov ... However, the main thing that formed Zhukov's opinion about the fleet, I think it was his ignorance of the ships and the specifics of the fleet. My attempts to introduce Zhukov closer to naval affairs and thereby arouse his interest in this branch of the Armed Forces were unsuccessful. I.S. Isakov (Chief of the Main Naval Staff. - V.D.) did not succeed either. And here is what Zhukov himself said about this: "I don't remember whether the named comrades "didn't work out" with me, or I "didn't work out" with them - it doesn't matter at all. But for the sake of historical accuracy, I must say that in general, neither the People's Commissar of Defense S. K. Timoshenko, nor the Chief of the General Staff were invited to discuss naval issues with I.V. Stalin. Returning to Zhukov's report, let us present some more combat readiness of information that fundamentally characterizes the Armed Forces. As of January 1, 1941, there were more than 4.2 million people in the ground forces, military aviation, navy, and air defense forces. 19 academies, 10 faculties at

civilian universities, 7 higher naval schools, 203 military schools operated to train and political personnel. "However, the question of the command qualified personnel of the armed forces in 1941 continues to be acute," Zhukov stressed. - The mass promotion of young commanders to senior command positions reduces the combat capability of the army for some time. In connection with a significant increase in the number of our armed forces, there is a shortage of qualified command personnel, tank specialists, artillerymen and flight personnel. As a positive moment, it was noted that "strategic stocks of fuels and lubricants, food, uniforms have been created, which, in case of war, will last for several years."

In conclusion, the Chief of the General Staff emphasized that "the current period in the development of our armed forces is a period of fundamental military reforms, the search for new ways to most effectively use military equipment, improve the entire system of combat training of troops, and develop Soviet military doctrine." Students of military academies are taught that wars are not declared in the present era, that the aggressor seeks to have on his side all the advantages of a surprise attack, so each military unit must be ready at any moment to repel an attack. "Military strategy is built mainly on the correct assertion that only offensive actions can defeat an aggressor. Unfortunately, other options for the fight - oncoming battles, forced retreats, battles in the environment (if, of course, we take not individual works, but the direction in the teaching of military disciplines) - are not considered thoroughly enough.

After Zhukov finished his speech, People's Commissar

Foreign Affairs Molotov asked: "It is not clear why the General Staff put up with such great shortcomings in preparation for the defense of the country, which Zhukov reported to us today?" Stalin reacted to this quickly and fairly: "Zhukov has been Chief of the General Staff for only a few months. He cannot be responsible for the inheritance left to him. This question, perhaps, should be asked first of all to you and me. Zhukov, having received unexpected support from Stalin, said: "Over the past five years, four chiefs of the General Staff have been replaced. Such a frequent change in the leadership of the General Staff did not make it possible to fully master the issues of the country's defense and to think deeply about all aspects of the upcoming war. There were no more people who wanted to ask questions to Zhukov, and in the final speech, Stalin supported almost all of his fundamental conclusions:

"... Comrade Zhukov is right: some of our command personnel who are selflessly devoted to the Motherland are young people who have recently been promoted to command positions and do not have sufficient military experience ...

Comrade Zhukov is right: the fortified areas on the old frontier cannot be completely disarmed. I think that it would be expedient to keep not only machine guns, but also part of the artillery in the areas being disarmed.

Those in charge of aviation should do everything possible to expedite the supply of new equipment to the aviation units. Report to me weekly. I understand the objective difficulties in this case. But the situation, when we managed to re-equip no more than 21 percent of aviation units with new aircraft, can no longer be tolerated.

As for the air defense forces, the primary task here is to organize a reliable cover for our industrial centers and prevent the enemy, in case of war, from destroying our economic potential.

About how work is being done in this direction, the People's Commissar of Defense with Chief of the General Staff to report to me weekly...

Comrade Kuznetsov, the speedy strengthening of coastal and air defense, the elimination of shortcomings in mine and torpedo armament is under your personal responsibility ... Comrade Malyshev (People's Commissar of

Medium Machine Building. - V.D.), special attention should be paid to creating (conditions) for faster development industry in the Urals and the East. It is necessary to complete the construction of machine-building, oil refinery and chemical backup plants as soon as possible and to organize the uninterrupted operation of metallurgical plants in Transbaikalia and the Amur, non-ferrous metallurgy enterprises in Central Asia. Do not forget that three-quarters of all new blast furnaces are being built here, and between the Volga and the Urals is our second oil base. Pay special attention to the work of hydroelectric stations, car assembly plants, pipe-rolling enterprises and aluminum combines in the new industrial regions that have been created ...

It is necessary to think over and work out top-priority specific proposals to eliminate shortcomings in the country's defense preparations and submit them to the government for resolution. Submit written proposals on these issues to me in three days. I only ask you to proceed from our real possibilities and not fantasize about the fact that we

until financially we can not provide. Comrades

in command of transport, leaders of the people's commissariats of ammunition, chemical industry, electrical industry and other sectors of the aviation, national economy of defense importance, must learn from today's criticism and radically improve their work. Otherwise, they will be removed from their posts. Everyone is free."195 Zhukov's report to the Politburo showed that in just four months he had fully mastered the nationwide scale of thinking

necessary for a true commander. The consistency and perseverance with which Georgy Konstantinovich defended his convictions made it possible, in the final analysis, to speed up the solution of many of the primary problems of the country's defense. Among them: conducting mobilizations, increasing the combat readiness of the defensive structures of fortified areas, the formation of mechanized corps and a number of others. Zhukov is not at all embarrassed by the tough posing of questions to people whose names alone awed those around him. He is not a diplomat, he is a soldier. And as for a soldier defending the Motherland, for him there is no problem of criticism, regardless of the faces. He sweeps away, like a husk, all the intricacies and conventions of relations in the highest circles - a soldier in battle is not up to it.

Recalling the May meeting in the Politburo, Zhukov noted that not all of Stalin's instructions were carried out in a timely manner. "N.A. Voznesensky and other comrades found our demands too high and reported to I.V. Stalin that the application for 1941 should be satisfied by a maximum of 20 percent. These proposals were approved. However, after repeated reports, I.V. Stalin ordered that a special decree be issued on the production of a significantly larger amount of ammunition in the second half of 1941 - early 1942. command posts. On June 4, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks decided to increase the strength of the Red Army in peacetime by 120,695 people and in wartime by 239,566 people. In the meantime, more and more alarming reports were being received along the line of intelligence. On May 29, the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army received a telegraph report from the military attache from Bucharest, in which he characterizes

the prevailing mood: "... The war against the USSR is not at all a problem from a military point of view. In two or three months, German troops will be in the Urals. The mechanized Russian army will expose itself to the German offensive in the western part of the USSR and will be utterly defeated there in the shortest possible time, since the Red Army, with its obsolete armored weapons and obsolete aircraft, will not be able to resist the advancing and numerically superior German weapons, which are far away from it. excels. In German circles of knowledge there is not a single person who had even the slightest doubt about the immediate victory over

195 Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 549-550.

196 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 337.

USSR.”¹⁹⁷

The leadership of the Wehrmacht, not fearing serious actions from Western opponents and not doubting their quick victory over the Soviet Union, concentrated their main forces along the entire stretch from the Baltic to the Black Sea. According to Zhukov, “by June 1941, Germany had brought the total number of troops to 8,500,000 men, having increased it by 3,550,000 men since 1940, that is, to 214 divisions. By June, taking into account the call for additional contingents, we had over 5 million people in the armed forces. The Nazi command began to carry out the most massive transportation of troops to the east from May 25, 1941. By this time, the Germans had transferred the railways to the maximum traffic schedule. In total, from May 25 to mid-June, 47 German divisions were transferred closer to the borders of the Soviet Union, of which 28 were tank and motorized. Hitler believed that the moment had come for an attack on the Soviet Union.”¹⁹⁸ And the defense initiative of the Soviet military leadership was still constrained by Stalin's position. So, in early June, the Military Council of the Kiev Special Military District, at the suggestion of M.P. Kirponos, made a very necessary decision

to withdraw part of the forces of the permanent garrisons of the fortified areas to the foreground in order to put the wood-and-earth firing points built there on alert. The head of the border troops of the NKVD of Ukraine, Strokach, reported this order to Beria, who immediately passed the information received to Stalin. Zhukov and Timoshenko were inflicted with a real dressing down. Warning them about the responsibility for the consequences, Stalin categorically forbade any advances of troops to the front lines without his personal instructions. Zhukov is forced to telegraph Kirponos: “Report to the People's Commissar of Defense for a report on the basis on which parts of the fortified areas of the KOVO were ordered to occupy the foreground. Such actions can immediately provoke the Germans into an armed clash and are fraught with all sorts of consequences. Cancel such an order immediately and inform who specifically gave such an unauthorized order.”¹⁹⁹ The next day, Zhukov ordered all the commanders of the western border military districts to 'not occupy the forefield without a special order from the field and UR units, and organize the protection of the foreground structures by sentry and patrolling'.²⁰⁰ The commanders of the troops of the border districts M.P. Kirponos, D.G. Pavlov and F.I. Kuznetsov, at the direction of Stalin, were summoned to Moscow, where they received the strictest instructions from Timoshenko and Zhukov on vigilance and the prevention of reasons for provoking the Germans on armed clash with the Soviet troops. By no means did Stalin react to all intelligence reports.

¹⁹⁷ Op. Quoted from: Military Historical Journal. 1992. No. 2. S. 40.

¹⁹⁸ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 342.

¹⁹⁹ Cit. Quoted from: Anfilov V.A. Terrible summer of 1941. S. 97.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

skeptical. Thus, the information received from Berlin on June 12 so alarmed him that Zhukov was able to send a directive on the same day to the commanders of the troops of the border military districts with instructions to withdraw divisions located in depth, closer to the state border, from June 12 to 15. The commander of the Kyiv Special Military District, General Kirponos, ordered the infantry divisions located in the depths to begin advancing in full strength, but without mobilization reserves, at 8 pm on June 18. In the Western Special Military District, the commanders of rifle corps and divisions received verbal orders to advance from the depths closer to the border. On June 13, Zhukov and Timoshenko asked Stalin for permission to put the troops of the border districts on full alert and deploy the first echelons according to the cover plan. Stalin promised to think. Since mid-June, ammunition was issued in some formations, vacations for personnel were canceled, and the construction of command posts began. The troops were working out the "Plan-instruction for raising troops on combat alert". On June 15, the commander of the Baltic Special Military District, Colonel-General F.I. Kuznetsov, demanded to maximize the combat readiness of units and disperse aviation. According to

this order, the commanders of the rifle divisions were to develop plans for the defense of their line, and the preparation of anti-tank mines and wire obstacles in front of the front line was to be carried out in such a way that a minefield, by special order, if necessary, could be established within three hours. carefully worked out. At the same time, air defense was ordered to disguise aircraft, tanks and artillery. All these activities were to be completed by June 25. Later, on June 18, the headquarters of the armies and formations were alerted and put on full alert, and the divisions located deep in the territory of the district and in the border zone on the night of June 19 began advancing to the border. At the same time, all aircraft remained at permanent airfields, moreover, over 40 percent of the air regiments were based in two at one airfield, and no measures were taken to disguise them. On June 14, Pravda published a TASS report declaring that all rumors about Germany's intention to break the non-aggression pact and attack the Soviet Union were groundless. Unfortunately, it only Red Army and dulled their vigilance. All these disorientated the commanders of the ^{plan} miscalculations in assessing the international situation and flirting with Nazi Germany turned fatally against the Soviet Union. Almost daily, Zhukov and Timoshenko attacked Stalin with requests for the need to bring the troops to full combat readiness. On June 15, at their next report, Stalin replied: "We have a non-aggression pact with Germany. Germany is up to its neck in the war in the West, and I believe that Hitler will not risk creating a second front for himself by attacking the Soviet Union. Hitler is not such a fool not to understand that the Soviet Union is not Poland, it is not France, and that it is not even England and all of them put together.

S. K. Timoshenko tried to object: "Well, if it's all the same

will happen? In the event of an attack, we do not have sufficient forces on the borders even for cover. We cannot meet and repulse the attack of the German troops in an organized manner, because you know that the transfer of troops to our western borders is extremely difficult in the current situation on the railways.

"What are you, - Stalin was indignant, - are you proposing to mobilize the country, to raise troops now and move them to the western borders? This is war! Do you both understand this or not?"

When Zhukov reported on the number of troops stationed in the Baltic, Western, Kiev and Odessa military districts, Stalin said: "Well, is that not enough? The Germans, according to our information, do not have such a number of troops. Zhukov reported that, according to intelligence information, the German divisions were equipped and armed according to wartime states. In each of their divisions there are from 14 to 16 thousand people. The Soviet divisions, even 8,000 strong, are practically twice as weak as the German ones. But Stalin again flared up: "You can't trust intelligence in everything ..."

On June 17, People's Commissar for State Security of the USSR V.N. Merkulov sent a message to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, in which, in particular, wrote:

"A source working at the German Aviation Headquarters reports: 1. All German military measures to prepare for an armed uprising against the USSR have been completely completed, and an attack can be expected at any time. 2. In the circles of the aviation headquarters, the TASS message ... was perceived very ironically. Emphasize

that this statement has no meaning

can not.

3. The objects of German air raids will primarily be: the Svir-3 power plant, Moscow factories producing individual parts for aircraft (electrical equipment, ball bearings, tires), as well as car repair shops.

4. Hungary will take an active part in hostilities on the side of Germany. Part of the German aircraft, mainly fighters, is already at Hungarian airfields ... A source working in the German Ministry of Economy reports that the heads of the military economic departments of the "future districts" of the occupied

territory of the USSR have been appointed ... "In the border military districts, commanders, without waiting for instructions from Moscow, at their own peril and risk, carried out strategic deployment activities. In the Baltic Special Military District, Colonel-General Kuznetsov ordered on June 18 to put the theater of operations on alert and to determine points for

organizing field depots, anti-tank mines, explosives and anti-personnel barriers on the site of each army. The order ordered to prepare improvised materials for the construction of crossings over the rivers Viliya, Nevyazha, Dubyssa, prepare pontoon shelves for building bridges across the Neman, and also reconnoiter the most important bridges with a view to their subsequent destruction. In addition, it was ordered to put on full combat readiness all air defense, all means of communication,

to prepare railway communication for work in a combat situation.²⁰¹ At the same time, the military councils of the armies and the commanders of mechanized corps received an order to start moving troops into the lanes and areas designated for them according to the cover plan, taking with them "only what is necessary for life and combat."

On June 19, Zhukov sent telegrams to the commanders of the troops of the border military districts about the withdrawal of front and army departments to field posts. "The People's Commissar of Defense ordered: by June 22, 1941, the department should go to Ternopil, leaving the district department subordinate to you in Kyiv," the telegram said to the commander of the Kyiv Special Military District. "The separation and transfer of the front's command and control should be kept in the strictest confidence, about which the personnel of the district headquarters should be warned." -Forest.

At the same time, the border military districts were instructed to work out issues of interaction with the fleet within two weeks in accordance with the cover plan. In order to disguise the airfields, the People's Commissar of Defense demanded by July 1 "to sow all airfields with grasses to match the color of the surrounding area, paint the runways and imitate the entire airfield situation in accordance with the surrounding background." The linear, crowded arrangement of aircraft was strictly prohibited, it was ordered to ensure their dispersal, to camouflage warehouses, workshops and parks by July 1, to organize by July 5 in each aviation-based area 8–10 false airfields with mock-ups of aircraft. By July 15, it was ordered to complete all work on the camouflage of artillery and mechanized units.²⁰³ The fleets and flotillas received an order to switch to operational readiness No. 2. After Stalin learned about the events in the Baltic district, he once again gave Timoshenko and Zhukov the next scolding. As a result, on June 20, the Chief of the General Staff sent a telegram to Kuznetsov demanding that the

order to put the air defense system on alert be canceled, as it causes various rumors and unnerves the public.

Meanwhile, at the western borders of the USSR, the German army groups North, Center, South, the separate German army Norway, the Finnish and two Romanian armies, and the Hungarian corps group were completing their deployment. In total, by June 22, in the first strategic echelon of the enemy there were 153 divisions and 19 brigades (of which German - 125 divisions and 2 brigades), over 4 thousand tanks and assault guns, about 4.4 thousand combat aircraft, almost 39 thousand guns and mortars. The total strength of the group, together with the German Air Force and Navy (192 ships of the main classes), was almost 4.4 million people. IN

²⁰¹ See: Anfilov V.A. Terrible summer of 1941. S. 102; Days of War in Documents // Military History Journal. 1989. No. 5. S. 46.

²⁰² Anfilov V.A. Terrible summer of 1941. S. 98.

²⁰³ See: Days of War in Documents // Military History Journal. 1989. No. 5. P. 43.

the strategic reserve of the German high command had 28 divisions and brigades, about 500 thousand people, 8 thousand guns and mortars, 350 tanks.

The western border military districts of the Red Army by this time consisted of 170 divisions, 2 separate rifle and 12 airborne brigades. These forces were relatively evenly distributed along the entire border and dispersed to a great depth (the third echelon of cover was located at a distance of 100-400 kilometers from the border). In total, the grouping of Soviet troops in the Western Theater of Operations consisted of 3 million people, about 39.4 thousand guns and mortars, 11 thousand tanks and more than 9.1 thousand combat aircraft.²⁰⁴

The enemy had a 1.3 times superiority in manpower, an equal ratio in guns and mortars, but was inferior to the Soviet troops 2.1 times in the number of combat aircraft and 2.7 times in tanks. But in terms of the quality of military equipment, the absolute advantage was on the side of Germany. In addition, its troops were fully equipped and deployed, equipped with modern transport and were in full combat readiness. Assessing the state of the Soviet troops advanced to the western border, most researchers agree that they were not prepared either for defense or, even more so, for an offensive. Zhukov noted that the war found the country in the stage of reorganization, rearmament and retraining of the armed forces, the creation of mobilization stocks and state

reserves:

“Neither the Commissar, nor I, nor my predecessors B.M. Shaposhnikov, K.A. Meretskov, nor the leadership of the General Staff expected that the enemy would concentrate such a mass of armored motorized troops and abandon the first day in compact groups in strategic directions. This was taken into account by the troops of the border military districts. our commanders are ready. True, it cannot be said that all this fell down on us like snow, of course, we studied the combat practice of the Nazi troops. on all head. even discussed Poland, France other European countries and ways of action. But the methods and their truly felt all this And in our country, throwing against the troops

only when the enemy attacked the border military on districts with their compact armored aviation groupings. The Soviet government did everything possible to give Germany And any reason to start the war. Everything was determined by this.

Not To

In general, the military theory of those years was, as they say, at the level of the times. However, practice to a certain extent lagged behind theory... “²⁰⁵ But in any case, it was possible to have time to put all the armed forces on full

combat readiness, mobilize the country and deploy troops to wartime states, concentrate and deploy them in areas of the western borders. However, Stalin's desire to gain time at any cost, to avoid war turned into a

²⁰⁴ See: Great Patriotic War 1941–1945. Military-historical essays. In 4 books. M., 1995. Book. I. Severe tests. S. 94.

²⁰⁵ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 324

the conviction that he will be able to solve everything peacefully. Relying on his "wisdom", Zhukov noted, Stalin was too clever himself and did not understand the insidious tactics and plans of the Nazi government. He demanded to pursue a cautious policy and carry out activities of the operational mobilization order so as not to provoke a war with Germany. Stalin considered it necessary to convince the Nazi leadership of the desire of the Soviet government to continue to maintain good neighborly relations, and to this end, until the last day, he demanded that the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade carry out all commodity deliveries, including coal, bread, oil products and other strategic materials, on time. As you know, these deliveries to Germany were carried out until June 21, 1941.

inclusive.

"In the period of the maturing of a dangerous military situation", - emphasizes Zhukov, - we military probably did everything to convince Germany that the V nearest I.V. With V And V life

plan. Of course these activities Not guaranteed to no complete success V
repel the enemy onslaught, since the forces of the parties were far away, the battle would be more organized.
on the enemy. This significantly greater losses. But our troops could be equal. enter into and, consequently,

V districts of Vladimir-Volynsky, Rava-Russkaya, Przemyśl and on others
sections of the southwest direction" .206

... Among those who in the last days and hours before the war was directly at the border, but on its western side, was the German General G. Guderian. "Careful observation of the Russians," he recalled, "convinced me that they did not suspect anything about our intentions. In the courtyard of the fortress of Brest, which was visible from our observation posts, to the sounds of an orchestra, they were holding guards. Coastal fortifications along the Western Bug were not occupied by Russian troops. The works to strengthen the shore have scarcely made any headway in recent weeks. The prospects for maintaining the moment of surprise were so great that the question arose whether, under such circumstances, it was worthwhile to carry out artillery preparation for an hour, as provided for by the order. Only out of caution, in order to avoid unnecessary losses as a result of unexpected actions of the Russians at the moment of forcing the river, I ordered artillery preparation to be carried out within the prescribed time.²⁰⁷ Chiang Kai-shek, on the beginning of the June 22 war of Germany against the USSR.

At the end of June 21, Zhukov received a phone call from the chief of staff of the Kyiv Special Military District, General M.A.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. pp. 361-362.

²⁰⁷ Guderian G. Memoirs of a soldier / Per. with him. Smolensk, 2003, p. 208.

areas for the offensive, which will begin on the morning of June 22." Zhukov immediately reported this to Stalin, who summoned him to his place along with Timoshenko.

This time, Timoshenko and Zhukov went to the Kremlin, taking with them a draft directive to the troops and firmly agreeing at any cost to obtain permission to bring the troops to full combat readiness. When they, and Budyonny with them, entered Stalin's office at 20:50, Molotov, Voroshilov, Beria, and Malenkov were there. Stalin, after listening to the generals, asked suspiciously: "Have they planted this defector on us to provoke a conflict?" Timoshenko confidently replied that the information received from the defector coincides with numerous other data. When asked by Stalin what was proposed in the current situation, Timoshenko said: "It is necessary to immediately issue a directive on bringing the troops of the border districts to full combat readiness and occupying defensive lines with them."

Zhukov began to read the text of a pre-prepared draft directive, but Stalin unexpectedly interrupted: "It is premature to issue such a directive now. Maybe the issue will be settled amicably. It is necessary to give a short directive in which to indicate that the attack of the German units may begin with provocative actions. The troops of the border districts should not succumb to any provocations, so as not to cause complications.

Zhukov went into another room and, together with General Vatutin, quickly drew up a new directive to the troops. Having familiarized himself with it, Stalin made several amendments and handed it over to the people's commissar of defense for signature. Directive No. 1 was sent to the military councils of the Leningrad, Baltic, Western, Kyiv and Odessa districts, a copy was sent to the People's Commissar of the Navy. It said that during June 22-23, a surprise attack by the Germans was possible, which could begin with provocative actions. "The task of our troops is not to succumb to any provocative actions that could cause major complications. At the same time, the troops of the Leningrad, Baltic, Western, Kiev and Odessa military districts should be in full combat readiness, to meet a possible surprise attack by the Germans or their allies. It was ordered: "a) during the night of June 22, 1941, covertly occupy the firing points of fortified areas on the state border; b) before dawn on June 22, 1941, disperse over field airfields

all aviation, including military aviation, to carefully disguise it;

c) put all units on combat readiness. Troops to keep dispersed and disguised;

d) put the air defense on alert without additional lifting of the assigned staff. Prepare all measures to darken cities and objects;

e) do not carry out any other activities without a special order."208 The transfer of this document to the districts ended only at 00:30 on June 22."

208 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 1. S. 370–371.

Chapter VII. In the mist of the June dawn

At dawn on June 22, Stalin was awakened by Zhukov. He went up to the phone rather quickly, but after a short report from the Chief of the General Staff, he did not immediately answer, as if he could not believe what he had heard. Finally, he ordered Zhukov to go with Timoshenko to the Kremlin. ... At the

headquarters of the military districts, directive No. 1 on possible provocations from the German troops was received about an hour later, and at the headquarters of the armies - only at three in the morning. It took time to decipher it. For example, the headquarters of the Western Special Military District received the directive at 01:45 and sent it to the army headquarters at 02:35. At the signal "Thunderstorm", the "Red Package" was to be put into action, in which there was a plan to cover the state border. However, the codes from the district were received too late. The headquarters of the 3rd and 4th armies still managed to make some orders, and the headquarters of the 10th army deciphered the order after the start of hostilities. Many formations and parts of the instructions did not have time to bring.

Things were more prosperous in the Navy, since Timoshenko directly warned the People's Commissar of the Navy Kuznetsov about the need to bring the fleet on combat readiness No. As a result, the fleet was put on alert 3-4 hours before the start of the war.

Throughout the night, Zhukov and Timoshenko were in continuous negotiations with the commanders of the troops of the military districts and the chiefs of staff. At one in the morning, the commander of the Western Special Military District, D.G. Pavlov, reported to the people's commissar that a very large movement of German troops was observed on the right flank, over the past one and a half days, German motorized mechanized columns had been continuously moving into the Suwalki ledge. Timoshenko advised the commander of the district not to panic, just in case, to gather headquarters in the morning, and if there were separate provocations, to call. Immediately after the conversation with the people's commissar, Pavlov ordered the commanders and chiefs of staff of the armies to bring the troops into combat condition and occupy all military-type structures and even unfinished reinforced concrete fortifications. The commanders of the 3rd, 10th and 4th armies and the district air force commander reported to Pavlov that the troops and aviation were ready for battle. The journal of combat operations of the troops of the Western Front noted: "... At about one in the morning, a cipher was received from Moscow with an order to immediately put the troops on combat readiness in case of a German attack expected in the morning. At about 2-2.30 a.m., a similar order was made in cipher: to the armies, units of the UR ... At the signal of the Thunderstorm, the Red Packet was put into action, which contained a plan to cover the state border. However, the orders and orders to put the troops on alert were in most cases received too late. The commander of the 75th Rifle Division, Major General S.I. Nedvigin, reported a few days later to the commander of the 4th Army: "The Red Packet was late, and hence the whole tragedy."209

At 3 o'clock 7 minutes in the office of the People's Commissar of Defense, a telephone rang

209 Op. Quoted from: Anfilov V.A. Terrible summer of 1941. S. 128.

call: the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, Vice Admiral F. S. Oktyabrsky, reported on the approach from the sea of a large number of unknown aircraft and asked for instructions. We agreed with Oktyabrsky's proposal: to meet the aircraft with anti-aircraft fire from the fleet. At 4 o'clock in the morning, the commander of the Black Sea Fleet reported that the enemy raid had been repulsed. At 03:10, the intelligence department of the headquarters of the Western

Special Military District reported to the head of the Main Intelligence Directorate F.I. Golikov:

"1. According to available data, which are verified, the main part of the German army in the ZapOVO zone took its original position.

2. In all directions, units and reinforcements are being pulled up to the border."210

At 03:30, Zhukov received a report on a German air raid on the cities of Belarus from the chief of staff of the Western Special Military District, General V.E. Klimovskikh. And three minutes later, the chief of staff of the Kyiv Special Military District, General M.A. Purkaev, reported that the cities of Ukraine had been bombed. At 0340, the commander of the Baltic Military District, General F.I. Kuznetsov, called and reported on air raids on Kaunas and other cities.

General G. Guderian, who commanded the 2nd tank group of German troops, reproduces the chronology of events in this way: "At 3 hours 15 minutes. our artillery preparation began. At 3 o'clock 40 min. - the first raid of our dive bombers. At 4 o'clock 15 min. the crossing of the Bug by the advanced units of the 17th and 18th tank divisions began. At 4 hours 45 min. the first tanks of the 18th Panzer Division crossed the river."211 The war diary of Army Group North records: "There was very little resistance on the border. The enemy was caught unawares."212 The report of the German headquarters of the 1st Panzer Group noted: "At 03:15 on June 22, the infantry began to advance. The enemy is stunned by surprise. At first he offered no resistance. The most important bridge at Sokal was captured intact. The crossing over the Bug was calm. The infantry climbed to the heights east of the Bug and reached a heavily fortified position without encountering any resistance. The enemy seems to have been taken unawares."213 When reading the reports, one must keep in mind that the Soviet command gave information in Moscow time, and the German command in European time, with a difference of one hour.

At half past five in the morning Timoshenko and Zhukov arrived at the Kremlin. V.M. Molotov, L.P. Beria, L. Z. Mekhlis gathered in Stalin's office. Zhukov was struck by the fact that Stalin was pale and was sitting at the table, holding an empty pipe in his hands. Even after Tymoshenko reported that the Germans were bombing our cities in Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states, he still admitted the possibility of a provocative nature of their actions.

210 Ibid. S. 115

211 Guderian G. Memoirs of a soldier. pp. 208–209.

212 Op. Quoted from: Anfilov V.A. Terrible summer of 1941. S. 118.

213 Ibid. S. 119

Molotov telephoned the German embassy. They replied that Ambassador Count von F. Schulenburg asked to receive him for an urgent message.

Meanwhile, the First Deputy Chief of the General Staff, General N.F. Vatutin, reported that the enemy ground forces, after heavy artillery fire in a number of sectors of the northwestern and western directions, went on the offensive. Soon, having received Schulenburg, Molotov returned and said that the German government had declared war on us. Quickly prepared a directive:

"To the military councils of the LVO, PribOVO, ZAPOVO, KOVO, OdVO
Copy: People's Commissar of the Navy.

On June 22, 1941, at 04:00 in the morning, German aviation, without any reason, raided our airfields and cities along the western border and bombarded them.

At the same time, German troops opened artillery fire in different places and crossed our border. In connection with the German attack on the Soviet Union, unheard of in its insolence, I order: 1. Troops to attack the enemy forces with all their forces and means and destroy them in areas where they have violated the Soviet border. Henceforth, until further notice, ground troops

do not cross the border. 2.

Reconnaissance and combat aviation to establish the places of concentration of enemy aviation and the grouping of its ground forces. Destroy aircraft at enemy airfields

and bomb the main groupings of his ground forces with powerful strikes by bomber and ground attack aircraft.

Air strikes should be carried out to the depth of German territory up to 100–150 km. Bomb

Koenigsberg and Memel. To the territory of Finland and Romania until further notice
do not fly.

Tymoshenko Malenkov Zhukov

No.

2 22.6.41 7.15.214

On the morning of June 22, Berlin radio informed the whole world about the beginning of the German war against the USSR. On the same day, TASS sent the leadership of the Soviet Union a secret service issue containing the "Hitler Declaration" published in Germany. It cynically stated:

"... Moscow treacherously violated the conditions that were the subject of our friendship pact. In doing all this, the rulers of the Kremlin pretended until the last minute, feigning a position of peace and friendship, just as it was in relation to Finland and Romania. They composed a rebuttal that gave the impression of innocence. Whereas until now circumstances have forced me to remain silent, now the moment has come when the waiting policy is not only

sin, but also a crime that violates the interests of the German people, and consequently, of the whole of Europe. Now approximately 160 Russian divisions are on our border. For a number of weeks there have been continuous violations of this border, not only on our territory, but also in the far north of Europe and in Rumania. The Soviet pilots amused themselves by not recognizing borders, apparently in order to prove to us in this way that they already consider themselves masters of these territories. On the night of June 18, Russian patrols again penetrated German territory and were pushed back only after a long skirmish. Now the hour has come when we need to take action against these Judeo-Anglo-Saxon warmongers and their assistants, as well as the Jews from the Moscow Bolshevik center.

A concentration of troops is being carried out, which in its scale and in its territorial coverage is the greatest that has ever taken place in the world. Collaborating with their Finnish comrades, the comrades-in-arms of the winners of Narvik hold the shores of the Arctic Ocean. The German divisions under the command of the victorious Norway guard the Finnish soil, together with the heroes of the Finnish liberation battles, acting under the leadership of their marshal. From East Prussia to the Carpathians are the formations of the German eastern front. On the banks of the Prut, on the lower reaches of the Danube to the shores of the Black Sea, there are German and Romanian soldiers under the command of General Antonescu, the head of the Romanian state: the task of this front is no longer to protect individual countries, but to ensure the security of Europe and, consequently, the protection of all countries of the European continent. Thus, I have decided today to place the fate of the state and our people in the hands of our soldiers. May God help us in this most important struggle!"²¹⁵

By noon on June 22, the text of the statement of the government of the USSR was prepared in Moscow, with which V.M. Molotov spoke on the radio at 12.15.

Returning in the morning from Stalin, Georgy Konstantinovich immediately summoned Vatutin, Vasilevsky, and all the heads of departments. They were given two urgent tasks: to prepare a decree on general mobilization and to clarify the situation on the border by any means. Where exactly are the fights taking place? Where is the enemy? What is

the nature of the actions of the troops? There were no intelligible answers to these questions - the German troops violated, and on the Western Front almost completely paralyzed command and control and communications. Months-long, practically unpunished flights of German reconnaissance aircraft, undercover data allowed the German command to identify command posts, communication lines, airfields, warehouses, and locations of troops with high accuracy. The first enemy strikes - air, artillery, tank - were stunning, sowed nervousness, confusion, inconsistency. Units and formations received conflicting instructions from higher headquarters and commanders.

The position of the border formations of the Red Army was complicated by the uncertainty of the tasks set by Directive No. 1. At the same time, even

²¹⁵ Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 185.

the half-measures formulated in it were completely impracticable. The task of "falling on the enemy forces and destroying them", set out in Directive No. 2, also looked unrealistic. After alerting the troops, the commanders hesitated to give orders for decisive action (God forbid they succumb to provocation!), And the troops entered the battle according to the situation: on the move, parts, disparate forces. Many rifle divisions of the first strategic echelon were dismembered in the very first hours after the attack, some were surrounded. The mechanized corps, capable of inflicting tangible counter strikes, were just beginning to advance towards the border and were at a great distance from the breakthrough areas.

On June 22, the Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces, General F. Halder, made an entry in his diary: "The offensive of the German troops took the enemy by surprise. The enemy's battle formations were not tactically adapted for defense; his troops in the border zone were scattered over a vast territory and tied to their quartering areas. The security of the border itself was generally weak.

Tactical surprise led to the fact that the resistance of the enemy in the border zone turned out to be weak and disorganized, as a result of which we easily managed to capture bridges across water barriers everywhere and break through the border fortifications to the full depth (fortifications of the field type). After the initial "tetanus" caused by the suddenness of

the attack, the enemy moved to active operations. No doubt there have been instances of tactical withdrawals on the enemy's side, albeit disorderly ones. There are no signs of operational withdrawal. It is likely that the possibility of organizing such a withdrawal was simply excluded. A number of enemy command authorities, such as, for example, in Bialystok [the headquarters of the 10th Army], were completely unaware of the situation, and therefore, in a number of sectors of the front, there was almost no leadership of the actions of the troops from the higher headquarters. But even regardless of this, given the influence of "tetanus", one can hardly expect that the Russian command, already

during the first day of fighting, was able to form such a clear picture of the situation for itself to be able to make a radical decision. It seems that the Russian command, due to its sluggishness, will not be able to organize operational opposition to our offensive in the near future at all. The Russians are forced to

accept the battle in the grouping in which they were at the beginning of our offensive. Our advancing divisions, wherever the enemy tried to offer resistance, threw him back and advanced in combat by an average of 10-12 km! Thus, the way is open for mobile connections."²¹⁶

Uncertainty had a depressing effect on Stalin, but there was no confusion in his decisions. He edited the draft Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR: from June 23, the mobilization of those liable for military service born in 1905-1918 was announced on the territory of almost all military districts. Approved the transformation of the Baltic,

²¹⁶ Halder F. Military diary. 06/22/1941–09/24/1942. M., 2004. S. 23.

Western and Kyiv Special Military Corps, respectively, in the North-Western, Western and South-Western fronts. He urgently sent B.M. Shaposhnikov and G.I. Kulik to the Western Front, and at about 1 pm he called Zhukov and announced the decision of the Politburo to send him to the South Western Front as a representative of the Headquarters of the High Command. Zhukov had to immediately fly to Kyiv, and from there, together with N. S. Khrushchev, leave for Ternopil, where the headquarters of the front was located. At the same time, Stalin instructed Vatutin, who remained behind Zhukov, to prepare another directive

to the troops: "The Military Councils of the North-Western, Western, South-Western and Southern Fronts

22.6.41 No. 3 map 1,000,000 1.

The enemy, inflicting main blows from the Suwalki ledge on Olita and from the Zamosc area on the Vladimir-Volynsky, Radzekhov front, auxiliary blows in the directions of Tilsit, Siauliai and Sedlec, Volkovysk, during 22.6, suffering heavy losses, achieved little success in these areas.

On the remaining sections of the state border with Germany and on the entire border with Romania attacked the enemy repulsed with heavy losses for him. 2. The immediate task of the troops on June 23–24 is: a) by concentric

concentrated strikes by the troops of the Northwestern and Western Fronts, encircle and destroy the enemy's Suwalki grouping and, by the end of June 24, capture the Suwalki area;

b) with powerful concentric strikes by mechanized corps, all aviation of the South-Western Front and other troops of the 5th and 6th A (armies. - V.D.) to surround and destroy the enemy grouping advancing in the direction of Vladimir-Volynsky, Brody. By the end of June 24, capture the Lublin region. 3. I order: a) The armies of the Northern Front to continue a strong cover

state borders...

b) The armies of the Northwestern Front, firmly holding the coast of the Baltic Sea, deliver a powerful counterattack from the Kaunas region to the flank and rear of the enemy's Suwalki grouping, destroy it in cooperation with the Western Front and by the end of 24.6 capture the Suwalki region ... c) The armies of the Western Front, holding back the

enemy in the Warsaw direction, deliver a powerful counterattack with the forces of at least two mechanized corps and front aviation to the flank and rear of the enemy's Suwalki grouping, destroy it together with the North-Western Front and, by the end of 24.6, capture the Suwalki area ... d) To the armies of the South-Western Front, firmly holding border with Hungary, concentric strikes

in the general direction to Lublin by forces of 5 and 6 A, at least five mechanized corps and all aviation of the front, encircle and destroy the enemy grouping advancing on the Vladimir-Volynsky, Krystynopol front, by the end of 24.6, capture the Lublin area. Strongly secure from the Krakow direction.

e) To the armies of the Southern Front to prevent the enemy from invading our territory. When an enemy tries to strike in the Chernivtsi direction or force pp. Prut and Danube with powerful flank strikes of ground forces in cooperation with aviation to destroy it; two mechanized corps on the night of 23.6 concentrate in the Chisinau area and

forests northwest of Chisinau.

4. At the front from the Baltic Sea to the state border with Hungary
I allow the crossing of the state border and actions, regardless of the border.

5. Aviation of the High Command: a)
support the North-Western Front with one sortie of the 1st aviation corps [us] DD
(long-range. - V.D.) and the Western Front with one sortie of the 3rd av. bldg. DD for the
period of their fulfillment of the task of defeating the enemy's Suwalki grouping;

b) include the 18th DD air division in the Southwestern Front and support the
Southwestern Front with one sortie of the 2nd av. corps DD for the period of their mission
to defeat the enemy's Lublin grouping;

c) 4th Av. leave the DD corps at my disposal in readiness to assist the main grouping
of the Southwestern Front and part of the forces of the Black Sea Fleet. People's
Commissar of Defense of
the USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union Timoshenko
Member of the Main Military Council Malenkov
Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army General
of the Army Zhukov Sent at 21.15 22.6.1941.”²¹⁷

Despite the fact that Zhukov had already flown to Kyiv, Stalin considered it appropriate
to put his signature under the directive. General

Vatutin, of course, did not know the true situation that had developed by the end of
June 22. Therefore, in determining the strategic frontier of the Red Army's response
actions, he was guided by the strategic deployment plan of May 15, 1941. Subsequently,
Marshal of the Soviet Union I.Kh. Bagramyan (at that time the head of the operational
department of the headquarters of the South-Western Front), evaluating this directive,
wrote: “When I read the telegram to General Purkaev, he looked at me with obvious
distrust, snatched out the form and re-read text several times. We exchange opinions
quickly. They converge with us: we are not ready for an offensive.²¹⁸ In Ternopil, at the
headquarters of the Southwestern Front, G.K. Zhukov and N.S. Khrushchev arrived late in
the evening of June 22. They were

met by the front commander, General M.P. Kirponos. Gathered the Military Council
of the front. There is no confusion, the situation is analyzed clearly, proposals are made in
a focused and concrete way. The front commander reported that the troops of the German
Army Group "South" under the command of Field Marshal K. Rundstedt crossed the state
border on the front of Vladava, Przemyśl,

Lipkany in the Lutsk direction with the forces of 4-5 infantry and tank divisions, on
the Russian side - 3-4 infantry divisions with tanks, in the Przemyśl-Lviv direction - 2-3
infantry divisions. Kirponos believed that on June 23 the enemy would take more active
steps and bring in larger forces. The chief of staff of the front, General M.A. Purkaev, said
that when at 2:30 a.m.

²¹⁷ Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 189–191.

²¹⁸ Bagramyan I.X. Thus the war began. S. 113.

of the General Staff, demanding that immediate measures be taken to bring the troops on combat readiness, the front command was on the move and arrived at the command post only at 8 o'clock in the morning. Immediately, the troops were alerted and began to carry out cover plans. Kirponos expressed the opinion: to attract the 31st, 36th and 37th rifle and 9th,

19th and 15th mechanized corps from his reserve, as well as the 22nd mechanized corps from the 5th army, the 4th from the 6th army and 8th - from the 26th Army to destroy the enemy grouping advancing towards Lutsk and Dubno. To Zhukov's question about where the mechanized corps were now located, the front commander replied that the 8th mechanized corps was on the march to the Brody area, and the 9th and 19th mechanized corps were ordered to advance to the Lutsk and Rovno area in order to launch a counterattack on the broken enemy from the north. At this time, the 15th mechanized corps is located in the Toporov area, and the rest will reach their original position by the morning of June 24th. Consequently, the order of the People's Commissar of Defense to occupy the lines indicated in it by the end of June 24 was clearly unfulfillable. Therefore, General Purkaev suggested creating a strong defense of reserve rifle corps at the line of fortified areas along the old state border, and withdrawing the mechanized corps beyond this line, that is, first stop the enemy, and only then, having prepared a counteroffensive, try to defeat him. General Kirponos agreed with the chief of staff's arguments, but said that "an order is an order, and it must be carried out, no matter what."

Kirponos was supported by Zhukov, who believed that in the current situation, the only right thing would be a counterattack by mechanized corps against enemy tank divisions. But the corps did not have time to concentrate into a single fist in time, and it was impossible to hesitate: the Germans, having introduced mobile units into the battle, continued to develop the offensive against Lutsk, Dubno, Brody. Therefore, Zhukov decided, without waiting for the approach of rifle and mechanized corps from the front reserve, to launch a counterattack with those corps that were at hand. The different distances of the corps from the area of their entry into battle (from 200 to 400 kilometers) also meant different periods of approach and entry into battle, which did not provide the necessary force to strike the enemy. But the situation compelled him to do so. On June 23, the 15th mechanized corps struck from the Toporovo area in a northerly direction to Radzkehov,

on the right flank of the enemy grouping, but the heavily swampy terrain and massive German air raids made it difficult to maneuver military vehicles. Despite this. The Military Council on the evening of June 23 decided "without waiting for the concentration of all mechanized corps, tomorrow, June 24, a counterattack on the enemy's tank and motorized divisions that had broken through only those forces that had already approached the battle area."²¹⁹ The troops of the 5th Army were to launch a counterattack in the general direction to Vladimir-Volynsky, to defeat the enemy units wedged in the Lutsk direction, and to connect with the surrounded regiments of the 87th Infantry Division. 15th mechanized corps,

²¹⁹ Ibid. S. 125.

having detached part of the forces for defense near Radzekhov and on the outskirts of Brody, he was supposed to advance in the direction of Berestechko in order to defeat the enemy's tank and motorized troops that had broken through from the Sokal area, and then connect with the encircled units of the 124th Infantry Division. The 6th Army was entrusted with the task of holding the occupied front at all costs, immediately withdrawing the 4th mechanized corps from the battlefield and turning it towards Radzekhov, to support the 15th mechanized corps. Parts of the 8th mechanized corps were to reach the Brody area by the morning of June 24 and be ready to support the 15th mechanized corps with a strike on Berestechko. For the rest of the armies, the task remained the same - to hold the occupied lines with a strong defense.

Kirponos discussed these plans with Zhukov immediately upon his return from the 8th mechanized corps, where he got acquainted with the state of the corps and how they were being advanced from the Lviv region to Brody. Georgy Konstantinovich remained true to the principle: one can understand the situation only on the spot.

Bagramyan, who was present at the report of the front commander, recalled: "The Chief of the General Staff was gloomy. He silently nodded in response to my greeting. From the conversation, I understood that Zhukov considers the actions of the front command to be insufficiently energetic and purposeful. According to him, a lot of attention is paid to solving secondary tasks and the concentration of corps is going too slowly. But it is necessary to determine the main danger and concentrate the main efforts against it. The enemy's tank and motorized groupings, which have penetrated deep into our defenses, are such a main threat. Therefore, the main forces of the front, with the support of all aviation, should be thrown precisely into these areas. Only in this way can a turning point be achieved in the course of a border battle. Zhukov considered it a mistake that Kirponos allowed the commander of the 6th Army to pull the 4th mechanized corps from the right flank of the army, where the enemy is delivering the main blow, to the left and bring it into battle in this secondary direction." 220 The next day, the 22nd mechanized corps the corps, together with the 135th rifle division, launched a counterattack on the left flank of the wedged enemy grouping, trying to help the 87th and 124th rifle divisions, surrounded

east of Vladimir-Volynsky. However, inconsistency in the actions of formations, heavy losses in battles and superiority of the enemy in tanks forced the command of the corps to retreat on June 25 across the Styr River north of Lutsk. In agreement with Zhukov, they decided to postpone the counterattack to the morning of June 26, since the 8th, 9th and 19th mechanized, 31st, 36th, 37th rifle corps had not yet reached the areas assigned to them.

But subsequent events developed without him. On the morning of June 26, Stalin called the command post of the Southwestern Front and suggested that Zhukov immediately fly to Moscow: a difficult situation had developed on the Western Front - the enemy was approaching Minsk. At the same time, it is not clear what is happening with Pavlov and where Kulik is, and Shaposhnikov fell ill.

220 Ibid. S. 126.

It was hard to believe that it was only the fifth day of the war - events were developing so rapidly and time was compressed so tightly under their weight. It was still impossible to assess the full scale of the impending disaster, but it became clear: the scope and power of the enemy's surprise strike overturned all the calculations and forecasts of the Red Army command. Nevertheless, for several sleepless days at the front, Zhukov, without even thinking about it, managed to believe that you can fight with the attacking enemy and you can beat him, like anyone else. He rather felt the latter - after all, there were no great grounds for such a conclusion. However, Zhukov saw that the commanders did not panic, orders and orders were being carried out, and the soldiers were ready to fight, and he personally saw this while in the 8th mechanized corps of Lieutenant General Ryabyshev. The thought flashed that it was not in vain that months of service in the Kiev district had passed. But after all, Stalin did not send him here by chance, relying on his special knowledge of the state of affairs in the district, commanders, and finally, the specifics of the terrain in the border areas. Zhukov himself, assessing the results of counterattacks in the southwestern direction, wrote:

"... As a result of precisely these actions of our troops, at the very beginning, the enemy's on Ukraine was thwarted by Kyiv. The V swift plan was convinced and the last drop soldiers ready To enemy suffered heavy losses, breaking through the stamina of Soviet V to fight blood" before

.²²¹ At the same time, Georgy Konstantinovich very critically assesses actions on other fronts, placing the main blame for the failures on the Headquarters of the High Command: „

Setting the task of a on counteroffensive, the Headquarters of the High Command knew the real situation that had developed. In its decision on the main state of affairs of the analysis of the real situation, the Command proceeded from well-founded calculations, without Not armed struggle " And into account the capabilities of the troops, which is not the case at crucial moments of the

Not from

A from

And aspirations in no To activity

case can not be done

.²²²

Note that by the decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of June 23 on the creation of the Headquarters of the High Command, it included People's Commissar of Defense Marshal Timoshenko (chairman), Chief of the General Staff Zhukov, Stalin, Molotov, Marshal Voroshilov, Marshal Budyonny and People's Commissar of the Naval Fleet Admiral Kuznetsov.²²³ In fact, it turned out, as it were, two commanders: legally - Timoshenko, but in fact - Stalin, since without the knowledge of the latter no one could give orders to the army in the field. This sometimes complicated the command and control of troops and led to belated decisions in the rapidly changing situation at the front. The situation was corrected on July 10, when the Headquarters of the High Command was renamed the Headquarters of the Supreme Command (from August 8 - the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command) under the chairmanship of I.V. Stalin.

Meanwhile, events on the fronts began to take on a catastrophic

221 Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 2. S. 24.

222 Ibid. pp. 30–31.

223 See: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 188.

character. Information coming from the headquarters of the fronts, as well as aviation intelligence data, plunged Stalin into a state of deep confusion. The Northwestern and Western Fronts tried to launch counterattacks, but weak air cover, inconsistency in actions, and poor artillery support did not give the desired result. The troops suffered huge losses and continued to retreat, often in disorder. The troops of the 3rd and 10th armies of the Western Front are practically surrounded. Tank columns of the Germans are approaching Minsk. Late in the evening of June 26, Zhukov headed straight from the airfield to the Kremlin. Members of the Politburo were in Stalin's office. In order to assess the

situation, Zhukov asked for forty minutes for a meeting with Timoshenko and Vatutin. The latest data from the General Staff boiled down to the following.

On June 23-25, the North-Western and Western Fronts attempted a counteroffensive, but the Western Front only managed to delay the enemy's offensive in the Grodno direction for a while, and the North-Western Front's counterattack on the flank of the enemy's 4th Panzer Group from the area northwest of Kaunas ended complete failure. As a result of the formation of the enemy, advancing on Daugavpils and Minsk, by the end of June 25, they advanced 125 and 250 kilometers, respectively.

At that time, in the Brest-Baranovichi direction, the troops of the 4th Army offered indiscriminate resistance to the 2nd Panzer Group and the 4th Field Army of the enemy, who managed to advance 200 kilometers inland. There was a real threat of an exit of the enemy to the Western Dvina River and Minsk. The 3rd and 10th armies of the Western Front found themselves in a difficult situation, the flanks of which were deeply engulfed by the enemy. For their access to Minsk, only a narrow corridor up to 60 kilometers wide remained between the cities of Skidal and Volkovysk. On June 25, Army General Pavlov was ordered to withdraw these armies to the line of Lida, Slonim, Pinsk. At the suggestion of the General Staff, on June 25, the Headquarters decided to create an army group of the reserve of

the High Command, and the corresponding directive had already been given to the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Marshal Budyonny. The 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd armies are included in the reserve, and they are tasked with preparing a defensive line along the line of Nevel, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Zhlobin, Gomel, Chernigov and further along the Dnieper River to Kremenchug.

After consulting, Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin made the following proposals to Stalin. The group of reserve armies under the command of Budyonny urgently go on the defensive at the line of Nevel, Mogilev and further along the Dnieper River to Kremenchug with the task of being ready, at the direction of the Headquarters, to launch a counteroffensive. The commanders of the Northwestern and Western Fronts, with the forces of the withdrawing armies and frontal reserves, take up defense at the line of the Western Dvina River from Riga to Kraslava, the Minsk and Slutsk fortified regions, and immediately organize work to put the fortified regions on combat readiness on the old state border. In addition, it is necessary to urgently begin preparing a rear defensive line with the forces of two armies from the Stavka reserve along the line of Selizharovo, Smolensk, Roslavl, Gomel.

In this situation, Stalin had no choice but to agree with these considerations, which meant for him a very painful change in strategy: the transition to the defensive. "In our proposals," wrote Zhukov, "we proceeded from the main task of creating a defense in depth on the roads to Moscow, exhausting the enemy and, stopping him at one of the defensive lines, organizing a counteroffensive, gathering the necessary forces for this, partly at the expense of the Far East and, especially, new formations. Where the enemy would be stopped, what to take as an advantageous starting line for the counteroffensive, what forces would be gathered for this, we did not yet know at that time. For now, it was just a plan."²²⁴

At this meeting, Zhukov once again showed his character. In response to Stalin's question, what else could be done to improve the conduct of hostilities, he suggested that the illegally arrested generals and officers be released. The reaction of Beria, Voroshilov and Kaganovich - "Do we have people illegally arrested?" - is not surprising. But quite unexpectedly, Zhukov was supported by Tymoshenko, who said that these commanders did not participate in any conspiracies, they are honest patriots who devotedly love their Motherland, and can be of great benefit to our army. Stalin promised to think. When Zhukov returned to the General Staff, the communications

officer on duty reported that

the commander of the Southwestern Front was calling him. Through the noise of interference, he heard the voice of Kirponos, who reported on his decision by the reserve rifle corps to go on the defensive at the line of Lutsk, Kremenets, Gologura. The mechanized corps were ordered to stop counterattacks, withdraw from the battle and withdraw beyond this line. The expediency of launching a counterattack on the flanks of the advancing tank group of General Kleist was completely obvious to Zhukov. The

German grouping was not covered everywhere, and its troops were scattered along the roads. Our mechanized corps occupied an advantageous position on the flanks and in the rear of the enemy divisions. It was necessary to deliver a counterattack with all determination, without showing hesitation, without withdrawing the fighting divisions from the battle at the moment when they had success. Developing it, mechanized corps would force the enemy to temporarily go on the defensive. And this, in the final analysis, would enable the front to regroup its forces, bring up new formations from the rear, and take advantageous defensive lines. The command of the South-Western Front, according to Zhukov, was clearly in a hurry to go on the defensive, so he harshly demanded that Kirponos on the morning of June 27 go on the offensive and defeat the enemy, who had broken through to Lutsk and Dubno. Zhukov perfectly understood the idea of the headquarters of the South-Western Front: to suspend response actions in order to gather all forces into a shock fist, but he believed that passive defense would lead to disastrous results. One thing did not give rest in the report of Kirponos: information about large losses in tanks. And

this is with excellent command, good technical equipment of mechanized units and proper training of personnel. What then is being done on other fronts?

²²⁴ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 2. S. 35.

By the morning of June 27, information coming from other fronts formed a picture in which the position of the Southwestern Front looked completely different. Zhukov realized the fallacy of his decision to continue counterattacks in this direction. Having once again discussed the situation with Vatutin and Vasilevsky, the Chief of the General Staff ordered the preparation of a directive on the withdrawal of troops from the Southwestern Front to the line of the fortified areas of the old state border.

It was ordered to collect data on losses on the fronts. Georgy Konstantinovich experienced the tragedy of the first unsuccessful days of the war hard and painfully. Three or four times a day, he came to the communication center for negotiations with the commanders of the fronts and armies, the chiefs of staff, trying to understand: where are the troops? where is the enemy? what is being done? what are the results? The conclusion came quickly: in

addition to other delusions, they made a mistake when determining the direction of the main attack of the enemy. As it turned out, he was aimed at Moscow. This largely explains why in a matter of days the Western Front almost completely crumbled, whose troops left Minsk on June 28.

Now this front needed to be recreated almost anew. On June 27, the Headquarters issued a directive to the commander of the army group of the reserve of the High Command, Marshal Budyonny, to urgently occupy and defend the line along the Western Dvina and Dnieper rivers, from Kraslava to Loev, and prevent the Germans from breaking through to Moscow. The group headquarters was transferred from Bryansk to Smolensk. The 16th Army was transferred from Ukraine to the regions of Smolensk and Vitebsk, and the 19th Army a few days later. In the Moscow direction, a defense in depth was created. Despite the fact that the

counterattacks of the Soviet troops did not reach their goals, the Headquarters of the High Command still required them to conduct active offensive operations. Did not work out. The enemy moved to the east. On

June 29, in the Kremlin, Stalin, with members of the Politburo, raided the People's Commissariat of Defense in order to take a closer look at the situation in Belarus. In the People's Commissariat they were met by Timoshenko, Zhukov and Vatutin. Short report: communication with the troops of the Western Front has been lost, measures have been taken to restore it, but this will take a long time. After some time, Stalin exploded and attacked Zhukov: since there is no connection, the headquarters is powerless to lead.

Zhukov, offended by a rude shout, ran out into another room. Molotov followed him. Everyone was in a dejected state. A few minutes later, Zhukov, outwardly calm, returned. We agreed (at Stalin's suggestion) that Kulik would contact the Western Front.

The decision of the Headquarters of the High Command on the transition to strategic defense was the first step on the way out of the captivity of groundless illusions. But the failure of Stalin's military-strategic ideas turned out to be too deep - the huge casualties and catastrophic failures of the initial period of the war required explanations. On June 30, Stalin called Zhukov and ordered the commander of the Western Front, General of the Army Pavlov, to be summoned to Moscow. When the next day, Zhukov

saw Pavlov, he barely recognized him - Dmitry Grigorievich had changed so much in a few days of the war. On the same day, Pavlov was removed from command of the front and soon betrayed

court-martial. Together with him, the chief of staff, General V.E. Klimovskikh, the chief of communications, General A.T. Grigoriev, the chief of artillery, General N.A. Klich, the commander of the 4th Army, Major General A.A. Korobkov, and other generals of the Western Front. All of them were shot. Many years later, after a thorough and comprehensive investigation carried out by employees of the General Staff, all the "culprits" of the Belarusian tragedy were rehabilitated "for lack of corpus delicti".

And the threat of unreasonable punishments hung over other honest and capable commanders. As soon as the commander of the Northwestern Front, General F.I. Kuznetsov, ordered the troops to withdraw from the line of the Western Dvina River and occupy the Ostrovsky, Pskov and Sebezh fortified areas, Stalin immediately removed him from his post. And the new commander of the front, General P.P. Sobennikov, was ordered to restore the previous position at the turn of the Western Dvina River. The troops, having received a new order, were unable to attack or defend themselves. Feeling the confusion, the German troops struck at the junction of the 8th and 27th armies and broke through the front. The situation on the fronts required emergency mobilization measures. To this end,

on June 30, by a decree of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, the State Defense Committee (GKO) was created, headed by Stalin. All power in the country was concentrated in the hands of the GKO. To organize a rebuff to the enemy, the Stavka included in the Western Front the entire reserve group of the High Command - 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd armies - and appointed Timoshenko People's Commissar of Defense as commander of the front. In the rear of the front, in the Smolensk region, the 16th Army was concentrated.

With the departure of the people's commissar to the front, the entire burden of responsibility for the military operations of the troops fell on the General Staff and its chief. And with the constant deterioration of the situation on the fronts, Stalin's behavior became more and more uneven and extremely nervous. The scope of the work of the General Staff increased unusually, and such important issues as mobilization, the work of the rear, and railways were included in its scope of activity. Georgy Konstantinovich and his staff literally suffocated. At the insistence of Zhukov, the General Staff was reorganized at the beginning of July and became aimed exclusively at solving the tasks of leading the armed struggle. The Organizational and Mobilization Directorates were withdrawn from its composition. These days, Zhukov worked with great exertion of physical and mental strength. Next to the study there was

a small room where he slept, as a rule, from five to nine in the morning. But often even at that time he called his subordinates and gave instructions. Zhukov's apartment was then on Bersenevskaya Embankment, but he rarely looked home.

By the end of June, the situation on the Southwestern Front also deteriorated sharply. The breakthrough of German troops, first to Ostrog, and then to Rovno, threatened the armies of the front with grave consequences. The tank units of General Kleist, supported by the infantry divisions of the German 6th Army, inexorably crawled forward. The tip of the enemy's powerful wedge, which had so far been held down by mechanized corps attacks from the flanks, was still aimed at the small group of General M.F. Lukin. There were no Soviet troops behind it all the way to Kyiv. "It was clear that if Lukin's group could not stand it, then the enemy would go into

deep rear of the main forces of our front, - recalled I. Kh. Bagramyan. "This threat worried all of us. In all conversations, the thought came through: the border battle was lost, it was necessary to withdraw troops to the line of the old fortified regions. But no one dared to say it directly. Everyone understood that the fortified regions located on the line of the old state border were not yet ready to receive troops and provide reliable defense. And there was too little time and effort to bring them to combat readiness."²²⁵

Zhukov also understood this, but there was no choice. On June 30, a telegram was sent to the headquarters of the Southwestern Front, which indicated that the troops of the Southwestern Front should withdraw to the line of the Korostensky, Novograd-Volynsky, Shepetovsky, Starokonstantinovskiy and Proskurovskiy fortified regions before July 9th. In this regard, the 18th Army of the Southern Front, which adjoined the left wing of the Southwestern Front, was supposed to withdraw its right-flank troops to the Kamenetz-Podolsk fortified area (along the Zbruch River). In order to gradually level the line of retreating troops, the Southwestern Front was to hold an intermediate line until July 6: Sarny, the Sluch River, Ostrog, Skalat, Chortkov, Kolomyia, Berkhomet. In accordance with the task received, the troops of the Southwestern Front began to withdraw to the line of fortified

areas on the old state border. Zhukov closely followed how events unfolded in the front line. On the morning of July 1, he contacted the chief of staff of the front, General Purkaev, by direct wire and said: "Given the enemy's desire to cut off the 6th, 26th and 12th armies, it is necessary to show exceptional activity and ingenuity in leading the withdrawal of troops." Otherwise, Georgy Konstantinovich warned, catastrophe could not be avoided. He recommended that troops be withdrawn in a forced march, covering them with aircraft, and all anti-tank artillery should be kept closer to the most dangerous sectors.

The fear that the enemy would try to cut off the troops of the Southwestern Front from the line of fortified areas began to come true. Increasing pressure from the German strike force advancing along the Rovno-Shepetovka highway forced the troops of the 5th and 6th armies to move in divergent directions. The gap between their flanks widened, and the group fighting at the junction of these armies held out with the last of its strength. The enemy flowed around her from both flanks. There was a complete encirclement. Zhukov to Purkaev, the night of July 3: "...Given the enemy's desire to cut off parts of the 6th, 26th and

12th (armies), you need to show exceptional activity, ingenuity and courage in leading the withdrawal of units. If you don't do this, the armies will be cut off and for them it smells like a disaster..."

Zhukov to Kirponos, the night of July 6: "... Take measures so that the enemy does not end up in Berdichev and cut off the 26th and 12th armies. Hurry with the withdrawal for UR ... "

At 4 pm on July 7, German troops broke into Berdichev. "Neither at the headquarters of the 6th Army, nor at the headquarters of the front, did they know about this yet," I.Kh. Bagramyan later noted .

²²⁵ Bagramyan I.X. Thus the war began. S. 165.

²²⁶ Ibid. S. 179.

capture of the city by the enemy. Although the enemy failed to surround these armies, he passed through the fortified area. G.K. Zhukov only had to ask a rhetorical question in negotiations with the front headquarters: "I don't understand how you could let the enemy through the Shepetovsky fortified area?" The main forces of the German troops, meanwhile, were reaching

the distant approaches to Moscow. Fierce battles simultaneously unfolded in the Velikoluksky, Smolensk and Roslavl directions. The 2nd tank group of the enemy crossed the Dnieper, and the 3rd tank group broke through the defenses of the Western Front in the Vitebsk region. Then both tank groups launched strikes in converging directions on Smolensk, trying to encircle and destroy the troops of the Western Front. The German command planned to solve this problem and discover a direct road to Moscow without much difficulty, since it was believed that no more than eleven Soviet divisions were operating against Army Group Center. But, as it turned out, not everything was taken into account.

Under the energetic leadership of Zhukov, formations of the 22nd, 19th, 20th, 16th, 13th and 21st armies of the Western Front were deployed against the enemy. The main attention was paid to holding the Smolensk Gates - the interfluvium of the Western Dvina and the Dnieper in the Vitebsk - Orsha region, where the troops of the 16th, 19th and 20th armies were sent. The expected strike in the Mogilev direction was covered by the 13th Army, to the south of which the troops of the 21st Army occupied the positions. On the right wing of the Western Front is the 22nd Army. The remnants of the 4th Army were assigned to the rear for reorganization. The commander of the Western Front was tasked with organizing a powerful counterattack and eliminating the enemy's breakthrough from Vitebsk, holding the Orsha-Mogilev line with all his might and launching a counterattack in the Bobruisk direction against the flank of the enemy group advancing on Mogilev.

On July 13, the 21st Army struck in the direction of Bobruisk. She crossed the Dnieper, liberated Rogachev and Zhlobin and moved in a northwestern direction with battles. The commander of Army Group Center, Field Marshal F. von Bock, was forced to transfer large forces of the 2nd Field Army here. But the cavalry group of General O.I. Gorodovikov broke through its rear and went to the Bobruisk area. To combat it, the German command was forced to draw three more infantry divisions from its reserve. The stubborn defense of the 13th Army in the Mogilev region, the actions of the 21st Army near Bobruisk slowed down the advance of the Germans in the Roslavl direction. But in the center of the Western Front, German troops continued to advance. In the second half of July they reached the area of Yartsevo,

Yelnya, Smolensk, Krichev, Propoisk and penetrated deeply into our defenses. But at that time, both flanks of the Army Group Center were under the threat of counterattacks by the Soviet troops - favorable conditions were created for the encirclement and destruction of the Smolensk enemy grouping.

On July 14, on behalf of the Headquarters, Zhukov orders the creation of a Front of Reserve Armies, whose troops were deployed at the line of Staraya Russa - Ostashkov - Bely - Yelnya - Bryansk. "In front of the front of the armies and internal defense areas," the order stated, "to create a barrier zone with anti-tank obstacles and

continuous band of powerful anti-tank fire. When organizing the defense, pay special attention to the construction of various anti-tank obstacles, minefields and land mines, gaps for infantry and the equipment of artillery positions, especially anti-tank artillery. A very timely decision, just at that time a fierce battle broke out for Smolensk, there were battles already to the east of the

city. The new advance of the enemy in the direction of Moscow, wrote Zhukov, "was hard received by the State Defense Committee and especially by I. V. Stalin. He was beside himself. We, the leading military workers, have experienced the full weight of Stalin's wrath. It is no coincidence that Zhukov distinguished himself at the beginning of the year in the operational-strategic games of the senior command staff on the maps. Now he saw the yawning gap between the strike

forces of Army Groups Center and South, and he knew that the Germans, too, were well aware of the threat looming over the flanks of the central group. It is impossible to further develop the offensive against Moscow, it is necessary first to close the gap. At the same time, two options were considered: either to turn part of the troops of Army Group Center to the south, or to accelerate the defeat of the Southwestern Front by Army Group South. Since the Germans are now clearly not strong enough to solve the second task, the first option is most likely. The enemy must turn part of the forces from the Moscow direction!

Zhukov did not know that on July 19 the German High Command had already ordered the turn of a significant part of the forces of Army Group Center for operations in a southerly direction in order to eliminate the threat to its right flank and assist Army Group South in defeating the troops of the Southwestern Front near Kiev. However, the implementation of this decision was prevented by the offensive actions of the Soviet troops in the Smolensk direction.

On July 20, Zhukov signed a directive on conducting an operation to encircle and defeat the enemy in the Smolensk region. To this end, five operational groups were created from the divisions of the Front of the Reserve Armies of the High Command, which were to deliver simultaneous strikes from the northeast, east and south in the general direction of Smolensk. Unfortunately, their offensive began in fragments, on too wide sectors of the front, and was not crowned with success. But it deprived the troops of Army Group Center of the freedom of maneuver towards the flanks - to Ukraine and to the north. As a result, the enemy did not achieve a decisive turning point in operations against the Southwestern Front, and Army Group North under the command of Field Marshal V. Leeb was unable to develop an offensive against Leningrad.

The German General Staff assessed the current situation as follows: "Thus, the enemy gets one month of time to fortify himself west of Moscow in an organized manner for defense, while simultaneously repelling the offensive carried out in August by insufficient forces. In this way, he, in the end, achieved what is very important for him. With a constant threat to our flanks, he split the unity of forces. At the same time, he succeeded in excluding a direct threat to Moscow for several weeks and thereby achieving great political success.

Closely following the development of events on the fronts, Zhukov concluded that the German command, apparently, would not dare to leave

without attention, the sector dangerous for the Army Group Center - the right wing of the front - and will strive in the near future to defeat our Central Front. If this happens, then the enemy troops will have the opportunity to go to the flank and rear of our Southwestern Front, defeat it and, having captured Kyiv, will gain freedom of action in the Left-Bank Ukraine. Therefore, only after the threat to the flank of the central grouping from the southwestern direction has been eliminated, the enemy will be able to launch an offensive against Moscow. As for the northwestern direction, Zhukov believed that the enemy would try to reinforce the troops of Army Group North in order to capture Leningrad in the shortest possible time, link up with the Finnish army, and then also turn their forces to Moscow, bypassing it from the north. east. With this operation, the German command will seek to remove the threat to the left flank of its strike force in the Moscow direction.

On July 29, Zhukov reported his assumptions to Stalin. His main conclusion was that the enemy would not be able to conduct large-scale offensive operations in the Moscow direction in the near future, since he had suffered too many losses here from the counterattacks of the Soviet troops and did not have large strategic reserves to secure the flanks of Army Group Center. In the Baltic direction, without additional forces, German troops are not able to start an operation to capture Leningrad. In Ukraine, the weakest sector of the defense of the Soviet troops is Konotop-Gomel. Here the enemy will be able to turn part of the forces of Army Group Center and strike at the flank and rear of the troops of the Southwestern Front, holding the Kyiv region. We have the opportunity to compare Zhukov's assumptions with the intentions of the German command, which were set out in Directive No. 34 of the General Staff, signed on July

30 by Hitler. She demanded that the troops of the Army Group North continue the offensive against Leningrad, encircle it and establish contact with the Finnish army. Army Group Center was to go on the defensive, on the right flank to carry out an offensive with a limited goal - to take more advantageous starting positions. Army Group South was entrusted with the task of continuing operations against Soviet troops west of the Dnieper, seizing bridgeheads in the Kiev region and to the south, and destroying the 5th Army of the Southwestern Front.²²⁷ For the first time since the beginning of World War II, the German armies were forced to go on the defensive strategic direction. Hitler believed that in conditions when the resistance of the Soviet troops increased significantly, and the losses of the German troops increased, especially in tank groups, a simultaneous attack on Leningrad, Moscow and towards the Donbass was impossible. The attack on Moscow was stopped.

Thus, on the whole, Zhukov correctly predicted the enemy's plan. He considered it necessary to immediately organize a powerful counterattack in the western direction, while the enemy was weakened there, and to eliminate the Yelnin ledge. But his proposal to withdraw the Southwestern Front beyond the Dnieper, and surrender Kyiv in order to save the troops of the front, made Stalin furious. How can you think of surrendering Kyiv!

²²⁷ See: Halder F. War diary. 06/22/1941–09/24/1942. S. 197

And again, Zhukov, as had happened more than once at such meetings, let down his self-control: flaring up, he asked to be relieved of his duties as chief of the General Staff and sent to the front. And yet it is difficult to judge now what

influenced Stalin's decision regarding Zhukov: either the temper and harshness of Georgy Konstantinovich, or his proposal, unacceptable to Stalin, to surrender Kiev. Most likely, in particular, A.M. Vasilevsky believes, Stalin preferred to use Zhukov's command experience directly in the troops.²²⁸ One way or another, he was relieved of his duties as Chief of the General Staff. Zhukov was appointed commander of the Reserve Front while retaining the duties of Deputy People's Commissar of Defense and a member of the Headquarters.

On July 31, Zhukov, having handed over his affairs to B.M. Shaposhnikov, who was appointed in his place, left for Gzhatsk, to the headquarters of the Reserve Front. On the same day, he reported to Shaposhnikov about the critical situation in which the group of troops of General V.Ya. Kachalov fell: after the capture of Roslavl by the Germans, she was threatened with encirclement. Shaposhnikov agreed with Zhukov's proposal to immediately pull the left flank and center of the group to the east. However, the poor training of personnel, insufficiently close interaction between the branches of the armed forces, and the lack of aviation for their air support did not allow them to fully complete the task. Nine enemy divisions were thrown against the Kachalov group, which on August 3 managed to surround the Soviet troops in the Roslavl region. The next day, Vladimir Yakovlevich died in battle. This is also confirmed by the review of the headquarters of the 9th German Army Corps, subsequently captured by the Soviet troops: "By this moment, the commander of the 28th Army, Kachalov, had fallen, who, with his headquarters, together with a particularly powerful tank group, tried to break through Starinka, but, in the end, , was detained and did not pass. Zhukov in his "Memoirs and Reflections" writes that General V.Ya.Kachalov died a hero's death. Faced with the threat of a general collapse of the front, Stalin takes extreme measures in order to strengthen the discipline and stamina of the troops. Particularly indicative in this regard (and it

was indicative!) Order of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command of the Red Army No. 270 dated August 16, 1941 "On cases of cowardice and surrender and measures to suppress such actions." It said:

"Not only friends recognize, but our enemies are also forced to admit that in our war of liberation against the Nazi invaders, units of the Red Army, their vast majority, their commanders and commissars behave impeccably, courageously, and sometimes downright heroically. Even those parts of our army that accidentally broke away from the army and were surrounded, retain the spirit of stamina and courage, do not surrender, try to inflict more damage on the enemy and leave the encirclement ...

Deputy commander of the troops of the Western Front, Lieutenant General Boldin, being in the area of the 10th Army near Bialystok, surrounded by Nazi troops, organized detachments from the units of the Red Army that remained behind enemy lines, which within 45 days

²²⁸ See: Vasilevsky A.M. The work of a lifetime. S. 119.

fought behind enemy lines and made their way to the main forces of the Western Front ...

On August 11, Lieutenant General Boldin hit the Germans from the rear, broke through the German front and, joining with our troops, led 1654 armed Red Army soldiers and commanders out of the encirclement, of which 103 were wounded. The commissar of the 8th

Mechanized Corps, Brigadier Commissar Popel, and the commander of the 406th Rifle Regiment, Colonel Novikov, fought 1,778 armed men out of the encirclement. In stubborn battles with the Germans, the Novikov-Popel group traveled 650 kilometers, inflicting huge losses on the rear of the enemy.

The commander of the 3rd Army, Lieutenant General Kuznetsov, and a member of the Military Council, the army commissar of the 2nd rank Biryukov, with battles, led 498 armed Red Army soldiers and commanders of units of the 3rd Army out of the encirclement and organized the exit from the encirclement of the 108th and 64th rifle divisions. All these and

numerous other similar facts testify to the steadfastness of our troops, the high morale of our fighters, commanders and commissars.

But we cannot hide the fact that recently there have been several shameful facts of surrender to the enemy. Some generals set a bad example for our troops. The commander of the 28th Army, Lieutenant General Kachalov,

being encircled along with the headquarters of the group of troops, showed cowardice and surrendered to the German fascists. The headquarters of the Kachalov group came out of the encirclement, parts of the Kachalov group made their way out of the encirclement, and Lieutenant General Kachalov preferred to surrender, preferred to desert to the enemy.

Lieutenant General Ponedelin, who commanded the 12th Army, once surrounded by the enemy, had every opportunity to break through to his own, as did the vast majority of his army units. But Ponedelin did not show the necessary perseverance and will to win, succumbed to panic, chickened out and surrendered to the enemy, deserted to the enemy, thus committing a crime against the Motherland, as a violator of the military oath. The commander of the 13th Rifle Corps, Major General Kirillov, who found himself surrounded by Nazi

troops, instead of fulfilling his duty to the Motherland, organizing the units entrusted to him for a staunch rebuff to the enemy and getting out of the encirclement, deserted from the battlefield and surrendered enemy. As a result, parts of the 13th Rifle Corps were defeated, and some of them surrendered without serious resistance.

It should be noted that with all the above facts of surrendering to the enemy, the members of the military councils of the armies, commanders, political workers, special detachments who were surrounded, showed unacceptable confusion, shameful cowardice and did not even try to prevent the cowardly Kachalov, Kirillov and others from surrendering to the enemy.

These shameful facts of surrender to our sworn enemy testify to the fact that in the ranks of the Red Army, which staunchly and selflessly defends its Soviet Motherland from vile invaders, there are unstable, cowardly, cowardly elements. And these elements exist not only among the Red Army soldiers, but also among the commanding staff. As you know, some commanders and political workers, by their behavior at the front, not only do not show

the Red Army soldiers are an example of courage, stamina and love for the Motherland, but, on the contrary, they hide in the cracks, fiddle in the offices, do not see or observe the battlefield, and at the first serious difficulties in battle they give in to the enemy, tear off their insignia, desert from the field battle ... I order: 1. Commanders and political workers who

during the battle tear off their insignia and desert to the rear or surrender to the enemy, to be considered malicious deserters, whose families are subject to arrest as families of deserters who violated the oath and betrayed their homeland.

To oblige all higher commanders and commissars to shoot such deserters from the command staff on the spot. 2. Units and subunits that

are surrounded by the enemy selflessly fight to the last opportunity, take care of the materiel as the apple of their eye, break through to their rear of the enemy troops, defeating the fascist dogs.

To oblige each serviceman, regardless of his official position, to demand from a superior commander, if part of him is surrounded, to fight to the last opportunity, and if such a commander or part of the Red Army men, instead of organizing a rebuff to the enemy, prefer to surrender, destroy them by all means, both ground and and air, and the families of surrendered Red Army soldiers to be deprived of state benefits and assistance. 3. To oblige the commanders and commissars of divisions to immediately remove from their posts the commanders of battalions and regiments

who hide in crevices during the battle and are afraid to direct the course of the battle on the battlefield, to lower them from their positions, as impostors, to transfer them to the rank and file, and, if necessary, to shoot them on the spot , putting forward in their place brave and courageous people from the junior command staff or from the ranks of distinguished Red Army soldiers. "229 The order was signed by Stalin, Molotov, Budyonny, Voroshilov,

Timoshenko, Shaposhnikov, Zhukov.

The order of August 16 was strictly carried out. General Kachalov, mentioned in it, was sentenced to death after death. A decision was made to prosecute members of his family. Kachalov's wife Elena Nikolaevna Khanchin-Kachalova and his mother-in-law Elena Ivanovna Khanchin were sentenced to eight years in prison. In December 1953, the Main Military Prosecutor's Office came to the conclusion that Lieutenant General V.Ya.

... The situation on the fronts, meanwhile, continued to deteriorate. A particularly difficult situation developed in the Kiev direction. The troops of the German 2nd Army and the 2nd Panzer Group, turning south, went to Starodub on August 18, and the next day to Gomel and continued their rapid offensive, creating a real threat to the right flank and rear of the Southwestern Front. The counteractions of the Bryansk Front, on which I. V. Stalin so hoped, did not bring success. Events unfolded as Zhukov had expected. On August 19, he telegraphed to Stalin: "The enemy, having convinced himself of the concentration of large forces of our troops

229 Op. Quoted from: The Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945. Military-historical essays. In 4 books. Book. 1. Severe tests. pp. 421–422.

on the way to Moscow, having on its flanks the Central Front and the Velikoluksky grouping of our troops, temporarily abandoned the attack on Moscow and, going over to active defense against the Western and Reserve Fronts, threw all its shock mobile and tank units against the Central, South-Western and Southern fronts.

A possible plan of the enemy: to defeat the Central Front and, having reached the Chernigov, Konotop, Priluki region, defeat the armies of the Southwestern Front with a blow from the rear. After that - the main blow to Moscow, bypassing the Bryansk forests and a blow to the Donbass ... To counter the

enemy and prevent the defeat of the Central Front and the enemy's access to the rear of the Southwestern Front, I consider it my duty to report my thoughts on the need to assemble a strong grouping in the Glukhov region as soon as possible, Chernihiv, Konotop. The echelon of cover of concentration should immediately be thrown onto the river. Desna... "230

On the same day, a response telegram came from Headquarters:

"We consider your thoughts about the probable advance of the Germans towards Chernigov, Konotop, Pryluk correct. The advance of the Germans ... will mean bypassing our Kyiv group from the eastern bank of the Dnieper and encircling our 3rd (correctly 13th. - V.D.) and 21st armies. In anticipation of such an undesirable incident and to prevent it, the Bryansk Front was created (August 16. - V.D.) headed by Eremenko. Other measures are being taken, which we will report separately. We hope to stop the advance of the Germans. Stalin. Shaposhnikov".231

And again, Zhukov's conclusions made it possible to anticipate the actions of the enemy. On August 21, A. Hitler signed a directive, which, according to F. Halder, was "of decisive importance for the entire Eastern campaign." The directive noted that "the most important task before the onset of winter is not the capture of Moscow, but the capture of the Crimea, industrial and coal areas on the Donets River and blocking the routes of Russian oil from the Caucasus. In the north, such a task is the encirclement of Leningrad and the connection with the Finnish troops.

... The extremely favorable operational situation that has developed as a result of the entry of our troops to the Gomel-Pochep line must be immediately used to carry out the operation by the adjacent flanks of the South and Center Army Groups in converging directions. The purpose of this operation should be not only the displacement of the Dnieper

5th Russian Army by a private offensive of the 6th Army, but also the complete destruction of the enemy before his troops are able to retreat to the Desna, Konotop, Sula line. Thus, the troops of Army Group South will be provided with the opportunity to reach the area east of the middle reaches of the Dnieper and, with their left flank, together with the troops operating in the center, continue the offensive in the direction of Rostov, Kharkov.

... It is required from the Army Group Center that, regardless of the plans for subsequent operations, it should throw into the above-mentioned operation such a quantity of forces that would ensure the completion of the task of destroying the 5th Russian Army and at the same time allow the army group to repel attacks enemy in the center

230 Op. by: Bagramyan I.X. Thus the war began. pp. 298–299.

231 Ibid. S. 299.

direction at such a line, the defense of which would require a minimum expenditure of forces ... ".²³²

The Germans clearly overestimated their positions in the central direction, especially in the Yelnya area. Having captured the city on July 19, they created a strong foothold here, deeply penetrating into the defense of the Soviet troops. The German command sought to keep this bridgehead at all costs, since it represented an advantageous starting position for a strike in order to further advance on Moscow. True to his habit of evaluating the situation not only on

maps, but above all on the ground, Zhukov made several visits to the headquarters and disposition of units of the 24th Army in early August. Having been at the forefront of defense, he came to the conclusion that in order to destroy the enemy, it is necessary to strike from the south and from the north under the base of the Yelnin ledge and surround it. The troops of the 24th army of General K.I. Rakutin tried several times to cut off the ledge, but the lack of forces, the lack of experience in conducting offensive operations did not allow this task to be completed. And the enemy, as it turned out, was much better than expected to prepare for the defense. On August 21, Zhukov ordered the commander of the 24th Army to stop the offensive and begin preparing a new, stronger and better organized attack. Georgy

Konstantinovich reinforced the grouping for the offensive with three divisions and artillery. Soon, a directive from the Stavka was also received, which, in particular, stated: "To the troops of the Reserve Front, continuing to strengthen the main forces of the defensive zone at the turn of Ostashkov - Selizharovo - Olenino - the Dnieper River (west of Vyazma) - Spas-Demensk - Kirov, on August 30, left-flank The 24th and 43rd armies go on the offensive with the following tasks: to defeat the enemy's Yelnin grouping, capture Yelnya and, inflicting further strikes in the directions of Pochinok and Roslavl, by September 8, 1941, reach the front of Dolgie Niva - Khislavichi - Petrovichi. "²³³ The instructions of the Headquarters fully corresponded to the plans of Zhukov. He prepared carefully and prudently for this battle - after all, it was his first independent operation in the Great Patriotic War. Days and nights, he rode his GAZ-61 all-terrain vehicle in parts, spent a lot of time directly in the units, organizing reconnaissance of the enemy and

the terrain, working out issues of interaction between infantry and artillery.

Zhukov's driver A.N. Buchin recalls these days like this: "We were wound up at that time until we dropped, everyone was on the road, often under fire. Covered with dust, G.K. Zhukov looked like a black man, we are even worse ... Probably, never again during the entire war, Georgy Konstantinovich was almost all the time on the front line and near it, as near Yelnya. It is understandable - we were just starting to learn how to fight ... "Buchin

especially remembered a cool day at the end of summer, when they, together with Zhukov, witnessed a tragic air battle: two Messerschmitts shot our I-15 and I-16 fighters, which had used up ammunition on a mission. From one downed plane I managed

²³² Op. Quoted from: Halder F. Military diary. 06/22/1941–09/24/1942. pp. 271–272.

²³³ Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 209.

jump out the pilot. "Georgy Konstantinovich and we, witnesses of what was happening, breathed a sigh of relief: at least this one will be saved. But at the same moment, a Messer flashed by, slammed a line at point-blank range at the guy who was helplessly swinging on the lines and left. The parachute somehow carefully lowered the body of the pilot to the ground not far from us. Come up. He was just a boy, in blue overalls, a leather helmet, covered in blood. Zhukov abruptly ordered - to intervene with honors, turned and walked away. Rarely have I seen such anger on a general's face, his eyes narrowed and literally turned white.

In the Battle of Elninsk, nine divisions of Rakutin's army (60 thousand people, up to 800 guns and mortars, 35 tanks) were opposed by parts of the German 20th Army Corps of the 4th Army (about 70 thousand people, 500 guns and mortars, up to 40 tanks). To fulfill the plan of the operation, two shock groups were created - Northern and Southern, which delivered counter attacks on Leonov, and the third - Central - attacked Yelnya from the east. On August 30, the troops of the 24th Army went on the offensive, and in four days of fierce fighting, its strike groups penetrated the enemy defenses for 2 kilometers. Having repulsed strong counterattacks, by September 3 they covered the flanks of the enemy defending in the Elninsk ledge, narrowing his neck to 6-8 kilometers.

On September 4, Zhukov was called by direct wire by Stalin, who was informed that he plans to send forces towards Smolensk after the liquidation of Yelnya, leaving Roslavl in a difficult situation. It seemed to Stalin that military operations in the Smolensk region should be carried out only after the liquidation of Roslavl. The conversation then developed as follows:

„Zhukov . Tov. Stalin, I am not planning an operation in the direction of Smolensk and I think Timoshenko should deal with this matter. Strike 109, 149 and 104 (we are talking about rifle divisions. - V.D.) I would like to strike now in the interests of the fastest defeat of the enemy's Yelnin group, with the liquidation of which I will receive an additional 7-8 divisions to enter the Pochinok area, and, having screened in the Pochinki area in the direction of Smolensk, I could strike with a powerful group in the direction of Roslavl and to the west, that is, in the rear of Guderian. As experience shows, inflicting a deep blow in 3-4 divisions leads to trouble, because the enemy quickly covers such small groups with his moving parts. That is why I asked for your consent to such a maneuver. If you order to strike in the Roslavl direction, I can organize this business, but it would be more useful if I liquidated Yelnia first. Today, by the end of the day, the right flank of our Elninskaya grouping is occupied by Sofiyivka. The enemy's neck was only 6 km away. I think a fully tactical encirclement will be completed by tomorrow. All.

Stalin . I fear that the terrain is in the direction of Pochinok wooded and swampy and your tanks will get stuck there. . I

Zhukov report. The blow is planned through Pogulyaevka south of the river. Khmara in good terrain with access to the Storeno-Vaskovo area, 30 km northwest of Roslavl, 10 km south of Pochinki. In addition, you should not strike in the old direction. A German soldier crossed over to our side today, who testified that tonight the defeated 23rd Infantry Division had been replaced by the 267th Infantry Division, and right there he

watched parts of the SS. A strike to the north is also advantageous because it will fall at the junction of two divisions. All.

Stalin . You don't really believe in prisoners of war, ask him with passion, and then shoot him. We have no objection to your proposed maneuver 10 kilometers south of Pochinki. You can act, especially concentrate an air strike, also use PC (missiles. - V.D.). When are you thinking of starting?

Zhukov . I will regroup by the 7th. 7 preparation, 8 strike at dawn. I beg you to back me up with RS-76 shells, and 152 mm 1930 shells, 120 mm mines. In addition, if possible, one Ilov regiment and one Pe-2 regiment and 10 KV tanks and 15 T-34 tanks. Here are all my requests. All.

Stalin . Unfortunately, we don't have PC reserves yet. When they are, we will. You will get the RSs, the only pity is that Eremenko will have to act alone against Roslavl. Can you organize pressure on Roslavl from the northeast? . Nothing, nothing, comrade. Stalin. I can only

Zhukov . separate detachments, backing them up with artillery, but this will only be a fettering blow, and I will deliver the main blow at dawn 8, I will try, maybe Eremenko will come out at dawn 7, still far from Roslavl, and I think Comrade. Stalin, that strike 7 or 8 - it will not be a late strike ... "234

Under the threat of encirclement, the enemy was forced to begin the withdrawal of his troops from the Yelnya region, and by the morning of September 6, Soviet troops liberated the city. Formations of the 24th Army advanced 25 kilometers to the west, liquidated the Elninsky ledge, and on September 8 reached the defensive line prepared by the enemy along the Ustray and Stryana rivers, where they met organized resistance. On the same day, Zhukov sent a report to Moscow: "To Comrade Stalin. Copy: To

Comrade Sapozhnikov I report briefly on the results of the Yelnin operation: In the Yelnya

area, from August 30 to September 6,
the following enemy units operated: infantry division and
one regiment 293 infantry division, two motorcycle battalions; guns 200–240. In the Austrian division, the entire command staff is Germans. These units of the enemy arrived from different directions in the period 20.8–30.8 and replaced the SS division, 15th infantry division, 17th division (motorized division. - V.D.), 10th division (tank division. - V.D.); 5, 31, 41 engineering battalions. According to the testimony of all the prisoners, the SS division, 15th infantry division, 17th infantry division, was withdrawn to the rear due to the very heavy losses that these divisions suffered in the battles for Yelnya. In total, during the period of fighting in the Yelnya region, the enemy lost 45-47 thousand people killed and wounded and a very large number of heavy machine guns, mortars and artillery destroyed by our artillery and aviation. According to the testimonies of the prisoners, in some parts of 137, 15, 178 infantry mortars and artillery were completely gone. According to the report of the majority of unit commanders and according to the corpses left on the battlefield, over the past 3-5 days the enemy has lost at least 5 thousand killed. In order to hide our heavy losses from our troops, the enemy

234 Op. Quoted from: From the history of the Great Patriotic War // News of the Central Committee of the CPSU. 1990. No. 10, pp. 214–216.

mass graves were leveled and disguised as the surrounding area. For shelter from our artillery fire and from aviation in all areas of the deployment of troops, both in the rear and in the forward positions, the enemy equipped a large number of shelters from 152-mm shells and 100-kg bombs. Shelters, as a rule, are arranged behind the reverse slopes of heights, deeply dug under the embankment of the railway and under the buildings of houses. There are open slots along the roads to shelter passing vehicles.

In pursuance of your order, units of the 24th Army completed the operational encirclement by 4.9, and the remaining neck is being shot through by artillery fire. We failed to completely close the encirclement of the enemy and capture the entire Yelninskaya grouping, since for this there were clearly not enough forces and, first of all, tanks on our right and left flanks.

The enemy, seeing the impossibility and hopelessness of resisting our offensive, on the night of September 5, brought the bulk of the artillery to the rear through the neck. On the morning of September 5, the withdrawal of the main forces began, and at 12-13 o'clock began to withdraw the 1st echelons of its defense.

To ensure the passage of troops through the neck, the enemy organized barrage artillery and mortar fire against our flank strike groups with the use of frequent counterattacks. Aviation was also thrown here by the enemy. The enemy used mining only in certain critical areas and partially - before leaving, he mined abandoned trenches.

Recently, the enemy has used tanks and aircraft in separate groups, and only to repel our attacks in the most important directions, apparently, he transferred these funds to other directions.

Of the composition of our troops, they acted very well: 107th rifle division (rifle division. - V.D.), 19th rifle division. Not bad acted: 100 sd and 102 td. Weak and lack of initiative acted: 303 and 309 sd. All parts operated in a large shortage.

All the artillery, even of the young divisions, worked very well. The PCs are wreaking havoc with their actions. I inspected the areas that the PCs were shelling and personally saw the complete destruction and destruction of entire defensive areas. Ushakovo, the enemy's main defense center, was completely destroyed as a result of PC volleys, and the shelters were littered and smashed. Pursuing the enemy, on 7.9 our units reached the river. Stryan, captured it and from the morning of

September 8 have the task of developing the offensive, interacting with the Sobennikov group (commander of the group of troops of the Western Front. - V.D.).

Our losses: from August 30 to September 6, about 3,000 were killed, 13,030 were wounded, and 1,116 were missing. Total losses for the last stage of the operation - about 17,000 ...

As a result of this operation, the mood and confidence in victory rose in all the troops. Now the units more confidently meet the enemy's counterattacks, hit him with fire and together, in turn, go over to counterattacks.

On the morning of September 8, units of the 24th and 43rd armies went on the offensive in order to destroy the enemy in the Boltutino area, the river. Khmara and a further blow in the Roslavl direction. Zhukov.

Kruglov (S.N. Kruglov - Commissar of State Security of the 3rd rank, member Military Council of the Reserve Front. - V.D.) "235

On September 15, for the first time since the beginning of the war, a number of foreign journalists were allowed to travel to our front to see Yelnya. The English journalist A. Werth admitted that he could not believe his eyes - everything was destroyed: villages, cities. In Yelnya itself, where 15,000 people lived before the war, "only the stone church survived." It was not only the destruction caused by military operations. Before fleeing, "the Germans went around the houses, took away everything that could be found of value in them, and then set fire to house after house."

Shell-shattered forests, scorched earth. Everywhere German corpses and mountains of destroyed Nazi equipment - tanks, guns, mortars. "This week spent in the Smolensk region," wrote Werth, "had an encouraging effect on me to a certain extent, but at the same time left the impression of a tragedy. Historically, it was one of the oldest Russian lands, almost the very heart of Ancient Russia ... The entire completely destroyed territory of the Elninsky ledge was tragic, where all cities and villages were destroyed, and the few surviving inhabitants huddled in cellars and dugouts ... And yet it was not just the first victory of the Red Army over the Germans, but also the first piece of land in all of Europe - some 150-200 square kilometers, perhaps - recaptured from the Nazi Wehrmacht.

The Elninsk battle was one of the first successful offensive operations of the Soviet troops in the Great Patriotic War. For steadfastness in the defense and decisiveness in the offensive, high discipline and mass heroism shown by the personnel, the 100th, 127th, 107th and 120th rifle divisions of the 24th Army were among the first to receive the honorary title of guards and, accordingly, new names: 1, 2, 5th and 6th Guards Rifle Divisions. Talent is fully revealed only when it is based on hard, sometimes hard labor. Having absolutely no time to sleep at

least once, Georgy Konstantinovich finds the strength in himself for a thorough analysis of the operation just carried out, the nature of the enemy's actions. In early September, he makes detailed notes in his notebook:

"The organization and successful conduct of the offensive operation to eliminate the Yelny salient, the comprehensively complex work as Chief of the General Staff in the first five weeks of the war gave me a lot of useful information for command activities on an operational strategic scale and understanding of various methods of conducting operations. Now I have a much better understanding of everything that a commander must

possess in order to successfully complete the tasks assigned to him. He was deeply convinced that the one who better prepared the troops entrusted to him in the political and moral sense, who managed to more clearly convey to the consciousness of the troops the goal of the war and the upcoming operation and raise the morale of the troops, who strives for military prowess, who does not afraid to fight in adverse conditions, who believes in his subordinates.

Perhaps one of the most important conditions for the success of a battle or operation is the timely identification of the weaknesses of the enemy troops and command. From a survey of prisoners, it became obvious that the German command and troops were acting purely according to a template, without creative initiative, only blindly following orders. Therefore, as soon as the situation changed, the Germans got lost, showed themselves extremely passively, waiting for the order of the highest commander, which in the current combat situation could not always be received in a timely manner.

Personally observing the course of the battle and the actions of the troops, I became convinced that where our troops not only defended, but counterattacked the enemy at the first opportunity, day and night, they almost always succeeded, especially at night. At night, the Germans acted extremely uncertainly and, I would say, badly.

From the practice of conducting the first operations, I concluded that most often failures befell those commanders who did not personally visit the area where the troops were to act, but limited themselves to studying it on a map and issuing written orders. Commanders who are to carry out combat missions must certainly know the terrain and battle formations of the enemy well in order to use the weaknesses in his deployment and direct the main blow there. The haste of decision-making by military leaders without a detailed recheck of the information received and without taking into account the personal qualities of those who report the situation - military

knowledge, experience, endurance and composure - has a particularly negative effect on the course of an operation or battle. Of great importance for winning a victory on any scale are well-trained on the ground (or, in extreme cases, on a box of sand) interactions of all types and branches of the troops, both in operational formations and in tactical formations ... "After the completion of

the Elninsk operation, Zhukov was summoned to Moscow and arrived at the Kremlin on September 9. Stalin praised: it turned out well near Yelnya. He admitted that Zhukov was right at the end of July - things are not going well near Kiev now. He asked who could replace Budyonny there, who could not cope. After these words, Zhukov

had little doubt that they planned to appoint him commander of the South-Western direction. It turned out not. Leningrad was waiting for him, located in

very difficult situation.

Assessing the general situation on the fronts at Stalin's request, Zhukov again expressed his conviction that the Southwestern Front was still the most dangerous sector. The troops of Army Group Center, which broke through to the Chernigov region, can crush the 21st Army and go to the rear of Kirponos. I am sure that Kleist from the Kremenchug bridgehead will promptly interact with Guderian. There is only one way out: immediately withdraw the Kyiv grouping to the eastern bank of the Dnieper, surrender Kyiv and strengthen the flanks of the front.

This time, Stalin reacted calmly, but did not say anything specific. Probably, anyone in the place of Georgy Konstantinovich would consider it madness with such persistence to offer to leave Kyiv and a rather large territory without a fight - you can pay for such advice. Anyone would, but not Zhukov. But time has shown how right he was. A month and a half later, Kyiv was lost, and four armies in addition to it.

Subsequently, firmness and courage in defending his position before the political leadership of the country did their job: the Supreme Commander began to listen with great attention to his reasonable conclusions and proposals when developing campaign plans and strategic decisions.

While Zhukov was preparing and conducting the first successful operation of our troops near Yelnya, the enemy, having concentrated nine divisions of the 4th Panzer Group in the Chudov area, resumed the attack on Leningrad. August 25 German troops captured Lyuban, August 28 - Tosno. The city on the Neva was less than 50 kilometers away.

On August 26, a whole group of authorized GKO's was sent to Leningrad: V.M. Molotov, G.M. Malenkov, N.G. Kuznetsov, A.N. Kosygin, P.F. Zhigarev, N.N. work did not bring tangible results. Stalin was extremely dissatisfied with the actions of the command of the Leningrad Front. The order, sent on August 28 to the front commander Popov, stated: "Your today's performances resemble blackmail. You are being intimidated by the commanders of the armies, and you, in turn, apparently decided to intimidate the Headquarters with all sorts of horrors about breakthroughs, aggravation of the situation, and so on. Of course, if you do nothing to demand from your subordinates, but are only an extra passing on the complaints of the armies, then you will have to surrender Leningrad in a few days, but the Headquarters does not exist to indulge in blackmailing demands and proposals. 236

The next day, Stalin sent a telegram to Molotov and Malenkov, secretary of the Leningrad City Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, Kuznetsov: "We have just been informed that Tosno has been taken by the enemy. If this continues, I'm afraid that Leningrad will be surrendered idiotically stupid, and all the Leningrad divisions are at risk of being captured. What are Popov and Voroshilov doing? They do not even report on the measures they are thinking of taking against such a danger. They are busy looking for new lines of retreat, in this they see their task. Where do they get such an abyss of passivity and purely rustic submission to fate? ..

It does not seem

whether you that someone deliberately opens the way for the Germans on this decisive plot?" (Italics mine. — V.D.).²³⁷ As you can see, there are again scoldings, mistrust, and suspicions.

And the enemy continued to stubbornly rush to Leningrad, on August 30 he went to the Neva, on September 8 he occupied Shlisselburg, going to Lake Ladoga and blocking the city from land. From now on, communication with the city was supported only by Lake Ladoga and by air. The new commander of the Leningrad Front, Marshal Voroshilov, gave the order to prepare for the destruction of the most important objects of the city. However, Kliment Efremovich was in this position for only a few days: the commission that arrived in Leningrad, headed by Molotov, came to an unequivocal conclusion: it was impossible to leave Voroshilov as the head of the defense of Leningrad. In Leningrad, Zhukov carried with him a note from Stalin addressed to Voroshilov: "Give command of the front to Zhukov, and you yourself

²³⁶ Ibid. pp. 212–213.

²³⁷ Ibid. S. 213.

fly to Moscow immediately."

Stalin was not sure whether Leningrad could be defended. According to Zhukov, he believed that "apparently, a few more days will pass, and Leningrad will have to be considered lost." It is no coincidence that Iosif Vissarionovich signed an order on September 13, which contained "an action plan in case of a forced withdrawal from Leningrad by ships and vessels." The first paragraph of this plan was that "in the event of a forced withdrawal from Leningrad, all ships of the navy, merchant, fishing and technical vessels are to be destroyed."²³⁸

Early in the morning of September 10, three units of the 160th Fighter Aviation Regiment took off from the Sarozh airfield, 20 kilometers north of Tikhvin. Soon they landed at the nearby Kayvaksia airfield, where they received an order to escort the Douglas military transport. Zhukov was on board. The flight went smoothly at first. However, when entering the coast of Lake Ladoga in the Shuryaga region, between the mouths of the Volkhov and Svir, Messerschmitts suddenly appeared ahead. Soviet fighters entered the battle with the enemy, the Douglas abruptly went to low altitude and increased speed, continuing to fly on its own course. German fighters made one attempt after another to break through to the Douglas, but the cover group, skillfully maneuvering in close proximity to it, repelled all enemy attacks. The enemy left the Soviet planes alone only near Leningrad. So, thanks to the courage and dedication of the pilots of the 160th Fighter Aviation Regiment, Zhukov's flight to the city on the Neva was successfully completed. Arriving at Smolny, Zhukov went to Voroshilov's office. Here, at a table covered with red cloth, about ten people were sitting - an expanded Military Council of the Leningrad Front was taking place, deciding on the destruction of the most important objects of the city and the ships of the Baltic Fleet.

The nature of the conversation literally infuriated Zhukov. Here they think not about resistance, but about the surrender of the city. He submitted Stalin's note to Voroshilov. He silently read it and sank heavily into a chair. Georgy Konstantinovich announced to those present that he had been appointed commander of the front, and General M.S. Khozin would be chief of staff. The order of the Headquarters on the appointment of Zhukov as commander of the troops of the Leningrad Front was signed on September 11. The situation in the city was critical. Before the war, no

one thought that Leningrad would have to be defended from the south. And now the city was blocked from all sides. Bombs and shells exploded on the streets, in residential areas. The German command by continuous shelling and bombing tried to break the will to fight among the troops and the population.

In this difficult situation, it was necessary not only to reverse the decadent moods of the command and leadership of the city, but also to organize a strong defense with the available forces in a short time. Help was not forthcoming. Zhukov ordered General I.I. Fedyuninsky, who had arrived with him from Moscow, to go to the 42nd Army, where the most tense situation had developed, to sort everything out on the spot and take the necessary measures to prevent the enemy from breaking through to Leningrad through the Pulkovo Heights.

²³⁸ Ibid. S. 216.

The commander of the Baltic Fleet, Vice-Admiral V.F. Tributs, was ordered to immediately clear the ships, pull them closer to the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland, establish interaction with the commanders of the armies and support the troops with fire from naval guns. The main efforts of artillery should be concentrated on Uritsk and Pulkovsky

heights.

To repel the attacks of German tanks, Zhukov ordered the use of anti-aircraft artillery in the most dangerous areas, especially in the Pulkovo Heights area, and immediately organized engineering work. For this, the population of the city was also mobilized. The formation of separate rifle brigades began on the basis of the fleet and educational institutions of Leningrad.

The enemy continued to rush towards the city. On September 13, the 42nd Army withdrew to the Pulkovo defensive line, the construction of which was never completed. The front line came close to Leningrad.

Anxiety reigned at Headquarters: the situation in the southwestern direction had become even worse. On September 12, the 1st Panzer Group of General E. Kleist went on the offensive from the Kremenchug region, striking in a northerly direction, and divisions of the 24th Motorized Corps of the 2nd Panzer Group of General G. Guderian moved towards it. Three days later, the trap slammed shut in the area of the small Ukrainian village of Lokhvitsy. The administration of the Southwestern Front and over 450 thousand people ended up in the Kiev cauldron. On September 20, Colonel-General M.P. Kirponos, commander of the front, died. The Supreme High Command considered that one of the reasons for the failures was that many fighters and commanders did not show the

necessary stamina. Extraordinary, tougher measures were required to restore order at the front. On September 12, the Headquarters sent directive No. 001 919 to the military councils of the fronts, written by the Chief of the General Staff Shaposhnikov under Stalin's dictation.

The directive noted that "in our rifle divisions there are quite a few panicky and directly hostile elements who, at the first pressure, drop their weapons and start shouting: We are surrounded! - and drag the rest of the fighters with them. As a result of such actions of these elements, the division takes to flight, abandoning the materiel. Similar phenomena take place on all fronts." It was further stated that "we do not have so many firm and stable commanders and commissars," and it was required "in each division to have a barrage detachment of reliable fighters. For each divisional barrage detachment (up to a rifle battalion) allocate cars, several tanks and armored vehicles. The barrage detachments were supposed to provide assistance to "the commanding staff in maintaining firm discipline in the division, stopping the flight of panic-stricken military personnel without stopping before using weapons, eliminating the initiators of the panic ...".

On September 14, Zhukov reported the situation to Shaposhnikov via a direct wire. It was extremely difficult in the southern sector of the Leningrad Front, where the Germans organized a breakthrough and approached the outskirts of the city from the south. Since the previous command of the front did not bother to create reserves in the Leningrad region, Zhukov had to restrain the offensive with the help of random detachments, individual regiments and newly formed working divisions. On the paths of movement

enemy, he organized a system of dense barrage fire, including naval, anti-aircraft and other artillery, mortars. All aviation of the front and the Baltic Fleet was involved in the defense of the southern borders of the city. In this direction, it was possible to collect up to a hundred tanks, and an NKVD division, reinforced by a hundred guns, deployed directly on the outskirts of the city.

But the forces, especially modern weapons, were clearly not enough. On the entire Leningrad front, out of 268 aircraft, only 163 were in good condition. The situation was especially bad with bombers and attack aircraft. Zhukov could count on only 6 Pe-2 aircraft, 2 Il-2 aircraft, 2 Ar-12 aircraft, 11 SB aircraft. Therefore, the front commander asked the General Headquarters essentially one thing: to strengthen bomber aircraft.

From a telephone conversation with Shaposhnikov, it is clear that Zhukov was dissatisfied with the state of morale and discipline in the troops: "Now we have to take fire measures and restore proper order in the units ... If necessary, we will not stop at any measures."²³⁹ Organizing the defense of Leningrad these days, Georgy

Konstantinovich placed special hopes on the 54th separate army of G.I. Kulik, which, by order of Stalin, was supposed to release the city from the east. On the night of September 15, he contacts Kulik and persistently asks him to immediately launch an offensive. But the commander of the 54th Army had his own problems: the Germans concentrated a large grouping opposite his right flank and went on the offensive. Therefore, he will need time to fight it off and concentrate his forces. After that, the conversation took on an unpleasant character. Zhukov to Kulik: "It is clear that you primarily care about the well-being of the 54th Army and, apparently, you are not sufficiently worried about the situation near Leningrad. You must understand that I have to throw people directly from the factories towards the attacking enemy, without waiting to work out the interaction on the ground. I realized that I can't count on an active maneuver on your part. I will solve the problem myself. I must say that I am struck by the lack of interaction between your group and the front. In my opinion, in your place, Suvorov would have acted differently. Excuse my bluntness, but I'm not up to diplomacy. I wish you all the best!"

Subsequently, Georgy Konstantinovich noted that Kulik was mistaken: the actions of the enemy were nothing more than an attempt to reconnoiter the defenses of the Soviet troops in battle. He clearly did not imagine or did not want to understand the extreme tension of the situation near Leningrad.

On September 16, Stalin and Shaposhnikov tried to influence Kulik, ordering "not to delay preparations for the offensive, but to conduct it decisively in order to open communication with Zhukov. In his conversation with you on September 15, Zhukov outlined his position to you, and therefore your operation cannot be delayed. Despite this, the troops of the 54th Army went on the offensive only a few days later. In the meantime, these persuasions were being carried out, the situation around Leningrad

sharply escalated again. The enemy broke through to the Gulf of Finland, cutting off

²³⁹ Zhukov G.K. Memories and reflections. T. 2. S. 170–172.

troops of the 8th Army from the main forces of the front. To the west of the city, the Oranienbaum bridgehead was formed. The next day, German troops captured Pavlovsk and broke into Pushkin. Zhukov was forced to take extreme measures and on September 17 issued an order to the military councils of the 42nd and 55th armies: "Given the particular importance in the defense of the southern part of Leningrad of the line: Ligovo, Kiskino, Verkh, Koyrovo, Pulkovskie heights, the Moscow Slavyanka region, Shushary, Kolpino, the Military Council of the Leningrad Front orders to announce to all commanding, political and ordinary personnel defending the indicated line that for leaving the indicated line without a written order of the military council of the front and the army, all commanders, political workers and fighters are subject to immediate execution." 240

At the same time, Zhukov and Zhdanov report to Stalin: "During 17.9.41 there were stubborn battles on the entire front, south of Leningrad. Particularly fierce fighting took place in the area of Razbegay, Strelna, Uritsk. Here the enemy, in addition to the five earlier advancing divisions, brought into battle one more infantry division (58 infantry divisions). As a result, the left flank of 8 A was pushed back by the enemy to Strelna. The right-flank units of 42 A left Uritsk, but then they again captured this point with a counterattack. The clearing of small enemy groups from the Ivanovo and Sosnovaya Polyana districts continues.

The enemy also carried out persistent attacks in the direction of Pushkin, where, in addition to the previously advancing four infantry and one tank divisions, he brought another tank division into battle.

As a result of fierce fighting, units of the 55th Army were pushed back and by the end of the day they were fighting in the north-eastern part of Pushkin and along the highway to

Putrolovo. Enemy aviation operated mainly on the battlefield, especially active on the front of the 55th Army, where up to 200 aircraft participated. There were also three air raids on the right bank of the river. Neva in the Porogi area. Our aircraft stormed and bombed concentrations of enemy troops and their approaching columns. On 18.9.1, the troops of the front were assigned the following

tasks: 8th Army - with the forces of at least five divisions to strike from the line of Khavoni, Pavkul on Krasnoye Selo; 42nd Army - stubbornly defend the occupied line; The 55th Army is to restore the lost position." 241 With the enemy's approach to the village of Volodarskogo and Uritsk, the left flank

of his strike force turned out to be extended. Given this, Zhukov decided to use the forces of the 8th Army to launch a counterattack on the enemy flank. However, having regrouped, on September 20, the enemy launched a retaliatory offensive with up to four divisions. The Germans managed not only to stop the advance of the troops of the 8th Army, but also to push it back.

"Lightning" flew to the headquarters of the 8th Army: "If the 8th Army allows the capture of Peterhof by the Germans, the Germans will defeat

Kronstadt for us. The 8th Army, by its actions, not only brings the Leningrad Front down, but plays a treacherous role. While 23, 42, 55 A brilliantly reflect all the attacks of the Germans, inflicting enormous losses on them,

240 Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 222.

241 Ibid. S. 223

The 8th Army, having 3-4 thousand Germans against it with 10-20 tanks, shamefully scatters at the first shot. The military council is inactive, set up more for evacuation, and not for a stubborn battle. Such a military council fully deserved severe punishment, up to and including execution. I demand: Shcherbakov, Chukhnov, Korolev to go to the 2nd bottom

(division of the people's militia. - V.D.), 11th rifle division, 10th rifle division and personally lead them into battle. Shevaldin and Koroleva warn commanders of all levels that they will be shot as cowards and traitors for leaving Peterhof without permission. To announce to everyone - not a single step back. Front Commander Zhukov Member of the Military Council Zhdanov.²⁴² Commander of the 8th Army V.I. Shcherbakov and member of the Military Council

I.F. Chukhnov were removed from their posts, and T.I. . War gives rise to phenomena that often stand outside the scope of

human understanding. Cruelty is one of them.

Leningrad to

Zhukov, Zhdanov, Kuznetsov, Merkulov They say that

the German bastards, marching on Leningrad, send ahead of their troops delegates from the areas they occupy - old men, old women, women and children - with a request to the Bolsheviks to surrender Leningrad and establish peace. It is said that among the Leningrad Bolsheviks there were people who do not

consider it possible to use weapons against such delegates. I believe that if there are such people among the Bolsheviks, then they must be destroyed in the first place, because they are more dangerous than the German fascists. My answer: do not be sentimental, but beat the enemy and his accomplices, voluntary or involuntary, in the teeth. War is relentless, and it brings defeat first of all to those

who have shown weakness and vacillation. If anyone in our ranks vacillates, he will be the main culprit in the fall of Leningrad. Hit with might and main on the Germans and on their delegates, whoever they may be, bone the enemies, it doesn't matter whether they are voluntary or involuntary enemies. No mercy for the German scoundrels or their delegates, whoever they may be. Please bring to the attention of the commanders and commissars

of divisions and regiments, as well as to the military council of the Baltic Fleet and commanders and commissars of ships. J. Stalin September 21, 1941 Dictated by telephone by Comrade Stalin at 4 o'clock on September 21. B. Shaposhnikov".²⁴³ The firmness and purposefulness of the new commander of the

Leningrad Front, the use of the most decisive, and sometimes cruel measures of influence to strengthen order, organization, and discipline, had their effect. Zhukov managed in the shortest possible time

to mobilize all the resources to protect

Leningrad, to use everything, even the slightest opportunity, that he had. In the troops became

²⁴² Ibid. S. 224.

²⁴³ Ibid. pp. 229-230.

there was confidence in success, and they fought with ever-increasing tenacity in their positions, turning into counterattacks at any opportunity. As requested by Zhukov. In the end, the enemy ran out of steam, the front stabilized. Field Marshal Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht Ground Forces, Field Marshal V. Brauchich, Commander of Army Group North, that he did not continue the attack on Leningrad with his remaining forces

Maybe".

German troops moved from a strategic offensive to a long positional siege, trying to strangle Leningrad in the grip of a complete blockade. Cut off from the mainland, the troops and the population of the city faced a long struggle for survival.

Chapter VIII. Not given Moscow

For the second day, the commander traveled around the area of hostilities and searched for his troops - this was not the case, perhaps, in the entire history of wars. "On that memorable trip," A. N. Buchin, who was then driving, recalled, "we went around headquarters after headquarters in the western direction. Zhukov, with some unknown instinct, was looking for another headquarters, they were disguised from the enemy, and in this case from his own. The further we drove along the front line, the more Georgy Konstantinovich became gloomy. There was something to be gloomy about. On the morning of October 8, with great difficulty, they finally found the

headquarters of the Reserve Front. They found out that there was practically no connection with the troops and the General Staff, information about the enemy was the scarcest, and, most curiously, the chief of staff, General Anisimov, did not know where the front commander S.M. Budyonny was. Presumably in Maloyaroslavets. Zhukov ordered to establish communication, to obtain information about the enemy, to block with artillery all the roads leading to Moscow, west of Vereya, Borovsk, Medyn, Kaluga.

It is deserted in Maloyaroslavets, not a single living soul. Budyonny was found in the building of the district executive committee. It turned out that he did not know where his, Budyonny's, headquarters was, and for more than two days he had no connection with the commander of the Western Front, Konev. According to Semyon Mikhailovich, the 24th and 32nd armies were defeated, and the front of defense does not exist. It is not known in whose hands Yukhnov

is. Zhukov had not seen such helplessness and such disorder for a long time. Yes, there is a mess - the collapse is complete. On the way back we passed places familiar from childhood, dear to our hearts. Protva, crossing Obninskoe. From here to Strelkovka is a stone's throw, some ten kilometers, and there, after all, a mother and sister with children. But every minute counts - the enemy is rushing towards Moscow. In two weeks, the Germans will trample on Zhukov's native land with their boots. Fortunately, he will have time to take out his loved ones in time. ... Directive No. 35 on the big autumn offensive on the Eastern Front, Hitler signed on September 6, 1941.

"Initial successes in operations against enemy forces located between the adjacent flanks of Army Groups South and Center, combined with further successes in encircling enemy troops in the Leningrad region, create the prerequisites for a decisive operation against an army group

Timoshenko, who unsuccessfully conducts offensive operations in front of the front of Army Group Center. It must be decisively defeated before the onset of winter, within the limited time still available. To this end, it is necessary to concentrate all the forces of the ground forces and aviation intended for the operation, including those that can be released on the flanks and deployed in a timely manner.²⁴⁴ Timoshenko in such a way as to go on the offensive as soon as possible (end of September) and destroy the enemy located in the area east of Smolensk,

through a double encirclement in the general direction of Vyazma, with powerful tank forces concentrated on the flanks. ... After the bulk of the troops of the Timoshenko group are defeated in this decisive encirclement and destruction operation, the Army Group Center must begin to pursue the enemy retreating in the Moscow direction, adjoining the right flank to the river. Oka, and left - to the upper reaches of the Volga In further operations, ensure that the offensive of Army Group Center in

the Moscow direction is covered from the south by moving out of the zone of Army Group South in the general direction to the northeast of the flank cover group formed from releasing mobile formations, and that the forces of Army Group North be aimed at covering the northern flank of Army Group Center."²⁴⁵

The development of the operation to capture Moscow under the code name "Typhoon" was led by the commander of the Army Group "Center", Field Marshal F. von Bock. On September 24, a meeting was held at the headquarters of Army Group Center with the participation of the Commander-in-Chief of the German Ground Forces, Field Marshal V. Brauchitsch and the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel General F. Halder, dedicated to the preparation of a new offensive. The troops of Army Group Center were to go on the offensive on October 2, and the 2nd Panzer Group on September 30. "This difference in the time of the start of the offensive was established at my request," Guderian recalled, "because the 2nd Panzer Group did not have a single paved road in the area of its upcoming offensive. I wanted to take advantage of the remaining short period of good weather in order to at least reach a good road near Orel before the onset of rainy time and secure the Orel-Bryansk road, thereby securing a reliable supply route for myself. "²⁴⁶

On September 26, the troops of Army Group Center received an order to resume the offensive. It was supposed to inflict three powerful blows from the regions of Dukhovshchina

²⁴⁴ Op. Quoted from: Battle of Moscow. Chronicle, facts, people. In 2 books. M., 2002. Book. I. p. 165.

²⁴⁵ Op. Quoted from: Dashichev V.I. Bankruptcy strategy of German fascism: East. essays, documents and materials. In 2 vol. M., 1973. T. 2. S. 14-73.

²⁴⁶ Guderian G. Memoirs of a soldier. S. 303

(3rd Panzer Group), Roslavl (4th Panzer Group) and Shostka (2nd Panzer Group) in the eastern and northeastern directions, break through the defenses of the Soviet troops, and then encircle and destroy them in the areas of Vyazma and Bryansk. The infantry formations of the 9th, 4th and 2nd armies were to pin down the opposing Soviet troops and prevent their premature retreat to the east, and if the operation was favorable, go on the offensive and liquidate the encircled grouping.

The German command, when deciding to conduct Operation Typhoon, relied on intelligence data, which, according to the operational report of the High Command of the Wehrmacht Ground Forces dated September 15, testified to the following: attacks. The actions of aviation and artillery were noticeably weakened. Captured officers talk about going on the defensive. Further plans of the Russian command are not yet clear. It can, on the advice of its allies, who consider the position of the Red Army more threatened than the Russians themselves, finally give a respite to their troops. Reasons such as the exhaustion of troops, heavy losses and lack of ammunition could also encourage the Russians to stop the attacks. One should take into account the possibility that in the coming days the Russians will regroup on the defensive and, possibly, withdraw part of the forces from the front in front of the Center GA ... "247 The General Staff of the Red Army in the twentieth of September received intelligence that the enemy was preparing a major offensive. The situation required the adoption of immediate measures to disrupt it, but the forces for this were not enough. Therefore, on September 27,

Stalin and Shaposhnikov sent a directive to the commander of the Western Front, which prescribed: "Due to the fact that, as it turned out during the battles with the enemy, the troops are not yet ready for serious offensive operations, go over to tough, stubborn defense in all sectors of the front. while conducting active reconnaissance of enemy forces and only, if necessary, undertaking private offensive operations to improve their defensive positions. It was ordered "to mobilize all the sapper forces of the front, armies and divisions in order to dig into the ground and arrange full-profile trenches on the entire front in several lines with communication passages, wire obstacles and anti-tank obstacles.

The directions to Rzhev, Vyazma and the junctions with neighboring fronts should be especially well covered in engineering and fire terms ... ".248 From this order it can be seen that the

Stavka was able to correctly predict the main directions of the enemy's offensive and tried to take preventive measures. However, there was a catastrophic lack of time to prepare a stable defense.

On September 30, the enemy went on the offensive in the Oryol direction, and on October 2, in the Vyazma direction. On October 3, German troops broke through the defenses of the Soviet troops on the Western Front to a depth of 50 kilometers, on the Reserve - to 80. In the Bryansk Front, they

247 Op. Quoted from: Battle of Moscow. Chronicle, facts, people. Book. 1. S. 197.

248 Ibid. S. 183.

overcame 200 kilometers and captured Orel. The Bryansk front, being cut by blows in several directions, lost its combat capability and, suffering losses, retreated to the east in scattered groups. The threat of encirclement loomed over his troops. Clouds were gathering over the Western and Reserve fronts, the defenses of which were also defeated. The situation grew tense every hour, but there was still no order to withdraw. Only at 7:45 p.m. on October 3 did the Chief of the General Staff order the troops of the Western Front to begin their retreat. At the same time, the Headquarters decided to withdraw the troops of the Reserve and Bryansk fronts on the night of October 6. In this situation, Stalin, alarmed by recent events, on October 5 ordered Zhukov to leave the Leningrad Front and

urgently arrive in Moscow. This time, Stalin was ill and received Zhukov in his Kremlin apartment. He looked bad and spoke dryly. And the situation in the theater of military operations

was not conducive to intimate conversations. From the Western and Reserve fronts for several days there were no clear reports

on the true state of affairs. Therefore, Zhukov was instructed to immediately go to their location in order to figure out what was happening there. Then Stalin asked Zhukov's opinion on the intentions of the enemy near Leningrad. Georgy Konstantinovich replied that in the near future a new offensive was not expected there, since the enemy suffered heavy losses and transferred tank and motorized divisions from near Leningrad somewhere to the central direction. These formations will probably be used for an attack on Moscow. Having then met with Shaposhnikov and received the necessary documents from him, Zhukov immediately left for the headquarters of the Western Front. He reached Krasnovidov, where the headquarters was located, late at night. I found in place the commander of the front, General I.S. Konev, the chief of staff, General V.D. Sokolovsky, a member of the

Military Council, N.A. Bulganin. The main thing that tormented everyone was the fate of the troops surrounded to the west and northwest of Vyazma. Konev ordered the commander of the 16th Army, General K.K. Rokossovsky, to withdraw them and concentrate in the forests east of the city. However, parts of the army had already been cut off by the enemy and remained surrounded. Rokossovsky himself, with the army headquarters,

managed to slip through the neck and was in the forest east of the city. There was no connection with the commanders of the 19th and 20th armies - Generals M.F. Lukin and F.A. Ershakov, with neighboring fronts. The armies of the right wing of the front - the 22nd, 29th and 30th, which suffered less, were ordered to withdraw to the line of the Volga, Rzhev, Sychevka. The front had no forces left to cover the central direction to Moscow.

The next day, October 7, German divisions closed the ring around a significant part of the troops of the 19th, 20th, 24th and 32nd armies of the Western and Reserve fronts west of Vyazma, and two days later surrounded the 3rd and 13th armies in the Bryansk region, which was captured the day before.

The enemy managed to break through a 500-kilometer gap in the defense of the Soviet troops. The situation was dramatic. The 2nd Panzer Group aimed at Tula in order to seize the roads for a further offensive on Kolomna, Kashira and Serpukhov. The 3rd and 9th armies intended to destroy the Soviet troops surrounded in the area

Dorogobuzh, Vyazma. The 4th Army was to advance from the Kaluga-Medyn line in a northeasterly direction, seize crossings across the Protva River at Maloyaroslavets and Borovsk. The 3rd Panzer Group was entrusted with the capture of the Gzhatsk line - south of Sychevsk. The 2nd Army was ordered, in cooperation with the 2nd Panzer Group, to crush resistance in the Trubchevsk, Zhizdra area and to capture the Roslavl-Bryansk road. It was necessary to prevent the chaos that could arise during a mass retreat of

troops and which was already brewing, to immediately cover the most dangerous gaps in order to prevent the enemy from developing success. Otherwise, the German armored forces may appear at any day and hour near Moscow. It was necessary to single out the main and most dangerous section. Having collected all the information available at the headquarters of the Western Front, Zhukov came to the conclusion: this is the Mozhaish line. On October 8, he reported this to Stalin, asking him to quickly draw up troops, from wherever possible, to the Mozhaish line of defense. Having traveled tens of kilometers along the front line in search of the headquarters of the Reserve Front and its commander, Budyonny, Zhukov was

convinced that he was not mistaken. But how to gather and concentrate forces on a sector that is deadly dangerous for Moscow?

Possessing a strategic initiative, the German command fully represented the capabilities of the opposing side. On October 8, General F. Halder writes in his diary: "The enemy is trying to bring some more forces to Moscow, primarily from the north. However, these hastily assembled troops are unlikely to be enough to prevent a strong threat to Moscow created by our troops, so that with more or less correct leadership and relatively favorable weather, the encirclement of Moscow should succeed. 249 But, apparently, the Germans did not take into account something. A commission of the State Defense Committee came to investigate the causes of the disaster on the Western Front. Having gathered in Krasnovodovo at the

command post of the front, Molotov, Voroshilov, Vasilevsky (members of the commission), and together with them Konev and Bulganin unanimously came to the conclusion that without the unification of the forces of the Western and Reserve fronts under a single command, the situation could not be saved and that the unification of the fronts was necessary. carry out immediately. "Moscow, to Comrade Stalin, we ask the Headquarters to make the following decision: 1. In order to unite the leadership of the troops in the western direction towards Moscow, unite the Western and Reserve Fronts into the Western Front. 2. Appoint the commander of the Western Front comrade.

Zhukov. 3. Appoint Comrade. Konev as First Deputy Commander of the Western Front. 4. Assign TT. Bulganin, Khokhlov and Kruglov, members of the military

Council of the Western Front.

5. Tov. Zhukov to take command of the Western Front at 18 o'clock on October 11. Molotov, Voroshilov,

Konev, Bulganin, Vasilevsky... 15.45 10.10.41."250

249 Halder F. Military diary. 06/22/1941–09/24/1942. S. 377.

250 Cited. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 237–238.

In the evening of the same day, this request was granted by the corresponding directive of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command. However, for two days Zhukov was in the position of commander of the Reserve Front, to which he was appointed on October 8 instead of Budyonny.

Zhukov, as always, remained true to himself and, in this crazy whirlwind of events, found time to analyze the reasons for the failures he witnessed: the command of all three fronts, having been warned by the Headquarters and knowing in advance about the concentration of large groupings of German troops in their strategic direction, did not managed to trace with its reconnaissance, in which starting areas and in which directions the main groupings of German troops were advancing, as a result of which the command was unable to determine the strength and direction of the strikes being prepared by the enemy;

without accurately determining the strength and direction of the strikes being prepared, the command of the fronts did not timely concentrate on the threatened areas the necessary forces and means to build a deeper defense there, especially its backbone - anti-tank defense;

the command of the fronts did not organize powerful aviation and artillery-mortar preparations in order to inflict maximum defeat on the enemy troops before the offensive and weaken the force of his strike;

the strike force of the German troops, grouped in the main directions, significantly exceeded the defense force of the troops of the fronts, especially in tanks, aviation and mechanized troops; when there was a breakthrough in the defense

of the fronts, the command failed to timely withdraw the 16th, 19th, 20th, 24th, 32nd armies from the threat of encirclement. As a result, most of the forces of the Western Front and part of the forces of the Reserve Front were surrounded and did not have the opportunity to break out of the encirclement.

Despite the fact that there was a constant transfer to the Western Front from the Stavka reserve and from other fronts of rifle divisions, tank brigades, artillery regiments, there were clearly not enough forces to create a continuous line of defense. Zhukov decides, first of all, to cover the most dangerous directions: Volokolamsk, Istra, Mozhaisk, Maloyaroslavets and Kaluga-Podolsk, in which the enemy was most active. The headquarters and administration of the 16th Army of General K.K. Rokossovsky were advanced to the Volokolamsk direction with the task of uniting the troops arriving there under their leadership. The 5th Army of General L.A. Govorov concentrated on the Mozhaisk direction, and the 33rd Army of General M.G. Efremov - on the Naro-Fominsk direction. Under Maloyaroslavets, the 43rd Army of General K.D. Golubev was deployed. The 49th Army of General I.G. Zakharkin advanced to Kaluga. I.S. Konev with a group of officers and the necessary means of communication had to organize command and control of troops in the Kalinin direction. On October 13, the battles that had calmed down a little broke out with renewed vigor in all directions of the Western Front. The enemy, taking advantage of the absence of a continuous line of defense among the Soviet troops, bypassed formations

and units, attacking them from the flanks or rear, and then stubbornly continued to move forward. The situation changed daily and

hourly. In such a situation, the outcome of the battle, the operation, and ultimately the fate of Moscow depended on each regiment and battalion. However, against well-equipped and trained German troops, Zhukov could use mostly hastily put together formations. Lacking proper training and cohesion, they often lost courage and retreated at the slightest pressure from the enemy, leaving one line after another.

A well-thought-out and well-organized withdrawal to new positions in the first months of the war was a rarity. After all, retreat - one of the most difficult types of military operations - before the war was considered a sign of weakness in the Red Army and was hardly studied. Now, for this, as well as for other miscalculations of the hardened military doctrine, they had to pay.

In this difficult, critical time for the country, Zhukov, as well as during his stay on the Leningrad front, takes a number of extreme measures in order to resolutely deploy all formations and units facing the enemy. On October 13, together with Bulganin, a member of the Military Council of the Front, he signed the order: "Cowards and alarmists who leave the battlefield, retreat without permission from their positions, abandon weapons and equipment, are shot on the spot."

Meanwhile, the command of Army Group Center had already come to believe that the Soviet troops were defeated and demoralized. On October 14, before its 4th Army and the 4th Panzer Group subordinate to it, it sets the task of immediately delivering a "strike in the direction of Moscow, with the aim of defeating the enemy forces in front of Moscow and firmly capturing the area surrounding Moscow, as well as tightly surrounding the city. For this purpose, the 2nd tank group should go to the area

southeast of Moscow in such a way that, covering from the east, it would cover Moscow from the southeast, and later also from the east. The industrial regions of Stalinogorsk, Tula and Kashira, which are of great importance for the supply of Moscow, must be captured as quickly as possible and firmly covered.

The 4th Army, with the 4th Panzer Group subordinate to it, with the echeloning of motorized units on its right flank, must complete the encirclement or envelopment of Moscow from the south, west and north, covering itself from the north and northeast. It is possible that in the future there will be a need to strike motorized units in the direction of Yaroslavl and Rybinsk ... "251

The enemy was so confident in the speedy capture of Moscow that on October 14, the commander of the 4th Army reminded his troops of the procedure in the city: "According to the categorical order of the Fuhrer and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, the troops should not enter the center of the city of Moscow. The boundary for offensive and reconnaissance is the district railway ... "Hitler was confident that in the coming days he would

be able to capture Moscow, Stalin was not sure that she could be held. As early as October 8, he signed a GKO resolution on carrying out special measures to destroy enterprises and other facilities in Moscow and the Moscow Region in the event that the capital was captured by German troops. This task was entrusted to the "five" under the leadership of the Deputy People's Commissar

251 Op. Quoted from: Battle of Moscow. Chronicle, facts, people. Book. 1. S. 323-324.

Internal Affairs Serov. On October 15, the GKO adopts a resolution "On the evacuation of the capital of the USSR, Moscow":

"In view of the unfavorable situation in the area of Mozhayskaya defensive line, the State Defense Committee decided:

1. Instruct Comrade Molotov to tell the foreign missions to evacuate to the city of Kuibyshev today. (NKPS - comrade Kaganovich ensures the timely supply of convoys for missions, and the NKVD - comrade Beria organizes their protection). 2. Today, evacuate the Presidium of the Supreme

Soviet, as well as the Government, headed by the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Comrade Molotov (Comrade Stalin will be evacuated tomorrow or later, depending on the situation).

3. Immediately evacuate the bodies of the People's Commissariat of Defense and the People's Commissariat of Defense in the city of Kuibyshev, and the main group of the General

Staff - to Arzamas. 4. In the event of the appearance of enemy troops at the gates of Moscow, instruct the NKVD - comrade Beria and comrade Shcherbakov to blow up enterprises, warehouses and institutions that cannot be evacuated, as well as all the electrical equipment of the metro (excluding water supply and sewerage).²⁵²

Rumors about the evacuation gave rise to panic among the population of Moscow. Echelons of factories and institutions were hastily loaded at the railway stations. Many officials in personal and private cars fled the city, a lot of people went on foot to the east. Looting and riots began in the city. Traffic jams arose on most roads, which created a real threat of disruption in the transfer and supply of troops.

Let's not guess whether Zhukov believed these days that Moscow could be defended. One thing is clear: for him there was no road to Kuibyshev. Signing orders "Not a step back!" with all the ensuing consequences, he measured them with his ideas about military duty, knowing that he himself would not flinch and run at a critical moment. He never proved anything to others - he just always did what he considered necessary, acted as his conscience commanded. Possessing extraordinary courage and courage, he could not stand arrogance and ostentatious fearlessness, he was always calm under bombing and shelling, on the front lines and in various troubles that often happened on the roads of war. Eyewitnesses claim that he never carried a weapon with him, only sometimes he took a service pistol on trips, which he kept in the "glove compartment" of an official car. The war for him, as for a real soldier, was a job that he performed with full dedication of his strength, more often at the limit of human capabilities. Zhukov did his job even when the enemy captured Borovsk, and a little later - Maloyaroslavets and Mozhaisk. The difficulties in this work were aggravated by the fact that the line of the Western Front turned out to be excessively stretched, and this made it very difficult

to control the troops. Therefore, on October 17, by decision of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command, three right-flank armies were withdrawn from the Western Front - the 22nd, 29th and 30th, which became part of the created Kalinin Front under the command of General I.S. Konev. After that, Zhukov could concentrate all his attention on solving problems directly related to the defense of Moscow.

On the rear lines of the 5th, 16th, 33rd, 43rd and 49th armies, on the roads leading to

²⁵² Quoted from: From the history of the Great Patriotic War // News of the Central Committee of the CPSU. 1990. No. 12. P. 217

Moscow, anti-tank detachments were put up. By order of Zhukov on October 19, they were ordered to have 1-2 anti-tank guns, a platoon of fighters with grenades and KS bottles, a platoon of sappers with mines, and a rifle company.

At the same time, the commander of the Western Front submitted to the Supreme Command Headquarters a plan for the withdrawal of the armies of the Western Front from the

Mozhaisk defensive line: "1. If it is impossible to hold back the enemy's offensive at the Mozhaisk defensive line of the front army, resisting the advancing enemy with rearguards, they retreat with the main forces, primarily the bulk of the artillery, to the line of defense being prepared along the line Novozavidovsky - Klin - Istra reservoir - Istra - Zhavoronki - Krasnaya Pakhra - Serpukhov - Aleksin. The withdrawal is covered by all aviation. 2. Prior to the deployment of army units on the main defensive line, organize and conduct battle with strong rearguards, saturated with air defense

systems, with the presence in each army of moving parts for delivering short counterattacks, to detain the enemy for a long time at the intermediate line Kozlovo - Gologuzovo - Elgozino - Novopetrovskoye - Kolyubakino - Naro-Fominsk - Tarutino, Black Dirt - r. Protva."253 Stalin approved this plan, agreeing that Zhukov had a sober assessment of the situation, but allowed the withdrawal of troops only with the special permission of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command.

In order to stabilize the situation in Moscow on October 20, Pravda publishes a resolution of the State Defense Committee: "... On October 19, 1941, Sim announced

that the defense of the capital at the lines 100–200 kilometers west of Moscow was entrusted to the Commander of the Western Front, Army General Comrade Zhukov, and to the head of the Moscow garrison, General lieutenant comrade Artemiev was entrusted with the defense of Moscow on its approaches. In order to provide logistical support for the defense of

Moscow and strengthen the rear of the troops defending Moscow, as well as in order to suppress the subversive activities of spies, saboteurs and other agents of German fascism, the State Defense Committee decided:

1. Enter from October 20, 1941 in the city of Moscow and adjacent to city areas under siege.

2. Prohibit all street traffic, both individuals and vehicles, from 12 am to 5 am, with the exception of vehicles and persons with special passes from the commandant of Moscow, and in the event of an air raid alert, the movement of the population and vehicles must take place in accordance with the rules approved by the Moscow air defense and published

in the press.

3. To entrust the protection of the strictest order in the city and in suburban areas to the commandant of the city of Moscow, Major General Comrade Sinilov, for which purpose the troops of the internal security of the NKVD, the police and volunteer working detachments are at the disposal of the commandant.

253 Op. Quoted from: Battle of Moscow. Chronicle, facts, people. Book. 1. S. 364–365.

4. Violators of the order should immediately be held accountable with the transfer to the court of a military tribunal, and provocateurs, spies and other agents of the enemy who call for a violation of the order should be shot on the spot.

The State Defense Committee calls on all the working people of the capital to observe order and calmness and to provide the Red Army, which is defending Moscow, with all possible assistance.

Chairman of the State Defense Committee I. Stalin. In the spirit of this resolution,

the command of the Western Front became even more firm in restoring order among the troops, and above all in the logistics institutions of central subordination. The heads of bases and warehouses located in the front line were brought to justice, who allowed the disruption of the supply of troops and the plundering of materiel. The roads were strict. Any violations of discipline were suppressed most resolutely. A stern warning is sent to the Military Council of the 43rd Army: "... In connection with the repeated flight from the battlefield of the 17th and 53rd Rifle Divisions (rifle divisions. - V.D.) I order: In order to combat

desertion, by the morning of October 22, a detachment of the barrier should be allocated, having selected in him reliable fighters at the expense of the airborne corps (airborne corps. - V.D.).

Force the 17th and 53rd Rifle Divisions to fight stubbornly, and in case of flight, the allocated detachment of the barrier to shoot on the spot all those who leave the battlefield.

Report the formation of the detachment.

Zhukov

Bulganin

21.X.41.254 The

next day, the commander of the 43rd Army, Major General K.D. Golubev, received an order to immediately arrest the commander of the 17th Infantry Division for unauthorized withdrawal from the defended lines. And in order to atone for guilt, "the 17th division, the 53rd division must be forced to return Tarutino on the morning of 10/22/41, by all means, including up to self-sacrifice. ... You report a small number of fighters in formations and heavy losses, search immediately in the rear,

you will find both fighters and weapons.

... In defense, fully use RSs (reactive systems. - V.D.), sparing no shells. Himself to be at the command post in the region of hostilities. For the defense of the Gorki area, Kamenka, I am subordinating

to you one more airborne brigade and a tank brigade, which you can move closer to Gorki from Kresta, but keep in mind if you don't feel sorry for the tanks just as you didn't feel sorry for them today, throwing them in the forehead at the anti-tank guns, and nothing will remain of this brigade, just as there is no left of the good 9th brigade.

Zhukov

Bulganin

Submitted 4.45 10.22.41.255

254 Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. S. 245.

255 Ibid. S. 246.

Despite the measures taken, the enemy continued to advance. However, in the operational summary of the High Command of the German Ground Forces dated October 22, the tone looks already more restrained: "... The Russian command only managed to stop the advanced German detachments with the help of all the reserves at hand, including separate battalions, detachments of the people's militia and police. Single events of a large scale have not been established. The combat power of the Russians was very different. While the forces operating on both sides of the Vyazma seemed exhausted during weeks of attacks in the direction of Smolensk, the enemy troops near Bryansk and to the south put up stubborn resistance and, after the encirclement, made strong attempts to break through to the east. 256 In the twentieth of October, German troops captured Naro Fominsky, Ruza and Volokolamsk. Ruza surrendered almost without a fight, despite the

order of the command of the 5th Army to stubbornly defend the occupied lines. The order to the troops of the Western Front, signed by Zhukov and Bulganin, said:

"Former and. (acting. - V.D.) division commander, Lieutenant Colonel Gerasimov A.G. and former commissar of the division, brigade commissar Shabalov G.F. treacherously violated the combat order and instead of stubborn defense of the Ruza region, they gave their order to withdraw the division.

The treacherous order of the division command made it possible for the enemy to take the city of Ruza and take the approaches to Novo-Petrovskoye without any resistance. For failure to comply

with the order of the front for the defense of Ruz and for the surrender of the city of Ruz without a fight, Gerasimov and Shabalov were shot in front

of the ranks. Announcing this for the information of commanders and political workers, the Military Council of the Front demands from all commanders of units and formations an uncompromising struggle against all manifestations of cowardice, especially on the part of the command staff, and warns of the steady implementation of the order of the Military Council of the Front, which prohibits unauthorized withdrawal without a written order from the army command and the front..."²⁵⁷

And yet the command of the Army Group "Center" was unable to build on the success that had been indicated, failed to implement plans for deep operational breakthroughs and the creation of "cauldrons". By turning the left wing of Army Group Center to the north, and the right wing to the southeast, it thereby to some extent helped Zhukov withstand the onslaught and delay the offensive, prepare new defensive lines, and wait for the reserves to approach. It can be said without exaggeration that Army General Zhukov won the first battle with Field Marshal von Bock. The plan to capture Moscow by mid-October failed. By the end of October, the 4th Panzer Group and the 4th Army of Army Group Center were stopped at lines located 70-110 kilometers west of Moscow. Operation Typhoon bogged down. In the German headquarters, the name Zhukov began to be mentioned more and more often. General G. Blumentritt, recalling the battle for Moscow, wrote: "When we came close to Moscow, the mood of our commanders and troops

suddenly changed dramatically ... The command of the Russian troops,

256 Op. Quoted from: Battle of Moscow. Chronicle, facts, people. Book. 1.C. 391.

257 Op. Quoted from: Krasnov V.G. Unknown Zhukov. pp. 246-247.

who covered Moscow, was now taken over by Marshal Zhukov (then still an army general. - V.D.). In a few weeks, his troops created a defense in depth that ran through the forest adjacent to the Nara River, from Serpukhov in the south to Naro-Fominsk and further north. Carefully camouflaged strongholds, barbed wire and large minefields now filled the huge forest that covered the western approaches to the capital.²⁵⁸

Let's not talk about the role of personality in history. Let us only pay attention to the fact that at the very beginning of the German operation to capture Moscow, the command of the three defending Soviet fronts had five (!) times more forces and means than was at the disposal of Zhukov by the second half of October. And it failed completely. About what kind of "legacy" he accepted, Zhukov mentions in a letter dated November 2, 1941 to a member of the Military Council of the Leningrad Front A. A. Zhdanov: "... As you know, we are now operating in the west - on the outskirts of Moscow. The main thing is that Konev and Budyonny overslept all their armed forces, took one memory from them. From Budyonny headquarters and 90 people, from Konev headquarters and 2 zap. (spare. - V.D.) regiment. By now I have put together a decent organization and basically stopped the advance of the pr-ka, and in the future you know my method: I will exhaust and then beat. Moscow. The time factor took on a special role with the approach of winter. The German command, which expected to end the war in a

fleeting campaign, did not prepare its troops for combat operations in conditions of snow and frost. But for the sake of objectivity, here are the words of the American journalist Henry Cassidy, who watched the battle near Moscow: "General Zima was not a general of the Red Army. If he were, he should have been shot for treason, for he fought against the Russians in exactly the same way as against the Germans.

Time was then needed for our entire country, which was rebuilding industry on a military footing and began to forge victory in the rear. Time is new tanks, planes, artillery pieces and rockets, without which it was impossible to count on success in further battles with a formidable enemy.

On the outskirts of Moscow, work was in full swing on the creation of a deeply echeloned anti-tank defense. The troops of the Western Front were replenished with personnel, weapons, and ammunition. In order to meet Zhukov's insistent demands, the Headquarters transferred additional rifle and tank formations from its reserves to the front. Georgy Konstantinovich grouped the main forces of these troops in the Volokolamsk and Istra directions, as well as in the Serpukhov region. He believed that it was here that von Bock would strike the main blows and try to continue moving around Moscow. How carefully the defensive lines were prepared is evidenced by the order of the Front's Military Council, issued at the end of

October. According to him, it was supposed to carry out the following

²⁵⁸ Op. Quoted from: Blumentrit G. Fatal decisions of the Wehrmacht. Rostov n / D., 1999. S. 99.

²⁵⁹ Op. Quoted from: G.K. Zhukov in the Battle of Moscow. Collection of documents. M., 1994. S. 38.

Events:

"a) to create barriers - to destroy the entire highway adjacent to our front line of defense, and the highway that the enemy uses for his maneuver, to a depth of 100 km. Destruction maintain continuously. Be sure to destroy all bridges. All tank-hazardous areas should be mined with anti-tank mines and bottles of KS. On possible directions of infantry attacks, immediately place barbed wire, blockages, barricades, anti-personnel minefields and prepare fire barriers. Build

barricades in all settlements, using all means at hand, up to and including residential buildings. To create fire barriers, bring oil, kerosene, fuel oil, gasoline and prepare them for quick ignition. Build traps in all directions, set as many hedgehogs as possible, prepare more unexpected surprises and, if possible, flood.

Pay special attention to the creation of anti-tank areas ... In areas of anti-tank defense, defense, using anti-tank guns and anti-tank weapons, artillery, all defense and anti-personnel and including captured;

b) to save personnel from artillery and mortar fire, immediately bury the entire defense deeper into the ground, separate more shelters, various holes, crevices and communications. The combat formations should be echeloned in depth, it is imperative to create reserves from the regiment commander and above, pull all the rears away and disperse them ... "260 . Here you can clearly see the combat experience acquired by Zhukov at Khalkhin Gol.

But Zhukov learned the main lessons from the mediocre miscalculations of his predecessors, who allowed the collapse of the Western, Reserve and Bryansk fronts. And he considered one of the main reasons for this collapse to be the loss of command and control of the troops as a result of the criminal state of communications. Therefore, on the eve of the decisive battles near Moscow, Georgy Konstantinovich paid, perhaps, no less attention to the organization of communications than to the preparation of anti-tank lines. In early November, he ordered the commanders of armies and division commanders to personally check the entire communication system with subordinate units, to have redundant means of communication in case of a battle, and to put all its types into action with the outset of battle. The commanders of the formations were obliged to "check the entire personnel of the subunits and communications units and remove the unfit immediately."

Zhukov always considered the soldier to be the main obstacle in the way of the enemy. He constantly emphasized the importance of political work in the army, the great importance that the morale of the troops has. And these were not empty words, "duty" phrases. Yes, war is war. It has to be not only taught, but sometimes forced to fight. Methods of coercion, hard influence, sometimes the most

extreme and cruel measures to be taken against cowards, alarmists and traitors. They have always been and will be at war. But you need to be able to raise morale and fighting spirit in the troops, to reach out to the soul and heart of a soldier fighting for a just cause.

On November 1, 1941, the Military Council of the Western Front issued an order for the active army, which essentially became Zhukov's combat manifesto before the upcoming battle.

"A month has passed since the German fascist invaders are on the offensive. The Hitlerite hordes are exerting every effort and are madly rushing towards Moscow. The troops of the Western Front, to whose lot the historical task of defending Moscow fell, are putting up heroic resistance to the enemy onslaught. In heavy bloody battles, defending every inch of our native land,

our families, our children, fathers and mothers, defending our freedom and independence, our troops repulse this onslaught of the enemy. Every step forward goes to the Germans at the cost of enormous losses.

... Despite the losses, the Nazi gang of fascist scoundrels, spurred on by fear of the cold Russian winter, continues to advance and seeks to complete its campaign in the East before frost and snow.

Cannibal Hitler, this bloody Black Hundreds, who flooded his temporary successes with people's blood, October 2 this year. Mr.. declared to his soldiers and the German people that the attack on Moscow was at the same time the end of the war. With this lure of peace and the end of the war, he brazenly and boastfully deceived his fascist gang of villains. Deceived the German people. It turned out differently. The offensive and lightning-fast capture of Moscow turned out to be not an easy task. And now Hitler, that cannibal ruler, has to put everything at stake in order to achieve the boastful promised "decisive success".

The fascist scoundrels go into battle counting on a winter holiday, counting on a "decisive success".

At the cost of any effort, we must frustrate these plans of the Nazis. Dear comrades, Red Army soldiers, commanders and political workers! The land and forests, where you are now defending our native Moscow with your chest, are stained with the sacred blood of our ancestors, whose struggle went down in the history of the defeat of the Napoleonic hordes. Our sacred duty is

to prevent the fascist dogs from trampling on this sacred land. The strength of the enemy is undermined

and depleted, but still the enemy is still strong and keeps coming. The Nazis,

who suffered heavy losses from your fire and bayonet, have again brought up human reserves in recent days. Ammunition and fuel are brought in and they are preparing to go on the offensive against Moscow.

Let us be ready to meet the enemy in a Bolshevik way, smash his forces and once [and] for all wean them from encroachment on our native capital. Having frustrated the plans of the

enemy and repulsed his next offensive, we will not only prevent him from reaching Moscow, but will also predetermine victory over Hitler. We forge his tanks and aircraft, we will make his manpower tremble and perish in the snowdrifts of the harsh Russian winter. Let's destroy it the way our ancestors destroyed Napoleon's army.

Fighting Red Army soldiers, commanders and political workers!

In these harsh days, the Motherland, our people and our great Stalin handed us the protection of our dear and beloved Moscow. The Motherland entrusted us with a responsible and honorable task: to become an indestructible wall and block the way for the German hordes to our capital... Not a step back is the

Motherland's combat order to us, the defenders of Moscow. ...Comrades, friends, brothers! ... We will take revenge on the Nazi bastards for plundering and the ruin of our cities and villages, for violence against women and children! Blood for blood! Death for death! Let's completely destroy the enemy! For our honor and freedom, for our Motherland, for our shrine Moscow!.."261

On November 1, Zhukov, on a call, arrived at Stalin's. What I heard was startling. In addition to the solemn meeting on the occasion of the anniversary of the October Revolution, a parade of troops will also be held in Moscow. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief asked Zhukov: would the situation at the front allow this to be done?

Georgy Konstantinovich believed that in the coming days the Germans would not launch a major offensive, as they had suffered serious losses in previous battles and were now forced to replenish and regroup their troops. Against aviation, which will certainly act, it is necessary to strengthen the air defense, to bring fighter aircraft to Moscow from neighboring fronts. Stalin was pleased, his mood was noticeably lifted.

The preparation of troops for the parade was carried out in the strictest secrecy. Only late in the evening, at about 11 p.m. on November 6, after a solemn meeting at the Mayakovskaya metro station, did the parade commander inform the unit commanders about their participation in the solemn march along Red Square. The parade was hosted by Deputy People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union S.M. Budyonny, the commander of the parade was Lieutenant General P.A. This event showed the whole world that Russia is alive, played a huge role in strengthening the morale of the army and the entire people. Meanwhile, intelligence received by the headquarters of the Western Front indicated that the command

of Army Group Center was intensively pulling fresh troops to the front. Zhukov was well aware that the enemy was completing the concentration of his strike groups and, apparently, would soon go on the offensive. It was not difficult to assume that the main blow was expected from the Volokolamsk region, and Guderian's 2nd Panzer Group, obviously, would hit Kashira bypassing Tula. He reported his assumptions to Stalin. After listening to the report by telephone, Stalin said that, together with Shaposhnikov, he considered it necessary to launch preemptive counterattacks in order to disrupt the enemy's impending offensive.

In this case, one counterattack must be delivered in the Volokolamsk region, the other - from the Serpukhov region to the flank of the 4th German army. Zhukov was perplexed. After all, the front command did not plan to conduct preemptive counterattacks - in the prevailing

conditions, it would be madness to carry them out against a stronger and more maneuverable enemy. Where can we get the time and energy now to create these counterattack groupings, to link their actions with aviation and artillery? Zhukov understood that Stalin, remembering the bitter lessons of the beginning of the war, was afraid that again the defense of the Soviet troops would be broken through and enemy tanks would break into Moscow. But it is not difficult to predict how attempts to defeat the enemy's powerful strike groups in an open frontal battle may end.

Georgy Konstantinovich replied that the Western Front did not have free forces for delivering counterattacks, but there were forces only for defense. If, however, the last reserves of the front are used now, then there will be nothing to reinforce the defense when the enemy goes on the offensive with his strike groupings. In addition, the line of defense of the Western Front has been greatly stretched, and with bends its length exceeds 600 kilometers. At the same time, there are few reserves in depth, especially in the center of the front. Stalin, who considered Zhukov to be a supporter of active actions and a master of counterattacks, did not expect that he would not support his idea. But he was not going to discuss, let alone cancel his decision. Recalling that the Western Front had six armies, he ordered counterattacks to be carried out using the right-flank formations of the

Rokossovsky army, the tank division and the cavalry corps of Dovator in the Volokolamsk region, and Belov's cavalry corps, Hetman's tank division and part of the forces of the 49th army in the Serpukhov region.

"A heavy impression remains
Supreme , Zhukov recalled. — I have this conversation Of course, because because With
counted , Zhukov recalled. — Moscow, which the fighters He Not
With my opinion to A
sworn to protect mortal danger, the last drop of blood, we were unconditionally ordered to throw at them, V
counterattacks the last reserves. Having A
used up further strengthen the weak areas of our defense We Not could V
262

At the same time, Stalin gave Bulganin a scolding over the phone, declaring that everyone at the headquarters of the Western Front was arrogant, but he would find justice for everyone. The order of the Supreme had to be carried out. The commander

of the cavalry corps, General P.A. Belov, described how on November

10 Zhukov brought him to Headquarters to Stalin to approve the plan for conducting counterattacks (Belov was supposed to act in the Serpukhov area). "In his (Stalin's) eyes there was no former firmness," Belov noted, "there was no confidence in his voice. But Zhukov's behavior surprised me even more. He spoke sharply, in an imperative tone. The impression was that the senior boss here was Zhukov. And Stalin took it for granted. Zhukov gave orders to Rokossovsky and Zakharkin (commanders of the 16th and 49th armies) to launch counterattacks with the forces of the cavalry corps. A significant amount of artillery and aviation was concentrated to ensure the offensive. In addition, Zhukov insisted on the involvement of the 81st air division of long-range bombers and the air formation of the Moscow defense zone. They struck at

airfields and supported the counterattacking units. However, counterattacks, as Zhukov expected, were not successful. The cavalry corps of Generals L.M. Dovator and P.A. Belov suffered significant losses and retreated to their original positions. The record in the documents of the German 4th Panzer Group testifies to how mercilessly the red cavalry were destroyed: "I could not believe that the enemy intended to attack us on this wide field, intended only for parades ... But now ... three lines of horsemen moved towards us ... Riders with shining blades rushed to the attack across the space illuminated by the winter sun, bending down to the necks of their horses ... The first shells exploded in the midst of the attackers ... Soon a solid black cloud hung over them. People and horses torn to pieces take off into the air ... It is difficult to make out where the riders are, where the horses are ... Mad horses rushed about in this hell. The few surviving riders were finished off by artillery and machine gun fire... And now a second wave of horsemen rushes into the attack from the forest. It is impossible to imagine that after the death of the first squadrons, the nightmarish performance will be repeated again ... However, the area has already been shot, and the death of the second wave of cavalry occurred even faster than the first ... "As expected, the unsuccessful attempt to attack the Western Front did not affect the plans of the German troops. On November 13, in Orsha, under the leadership of the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground

Forces, General F. Halder, a meeting was held that reviewed the situation on the Soviet-German front and plans for upcoming operations. Despite the fact that some generals expressed misgivings about what was happening at the front, Halder considered it necessary to fulfill Hitler's directive: to deal with the USSR before the onset of winter. On November 15, the troops of Army Group Center resumed their offensive against Moscow, delivering the main blows north and south of the capital. For an offensive north of Moscow (Operation Volga Reservoir) on the front of Kalinin, Volokolamsk, Ruza, the enemy concentrated 14 tank, motorized and infantry divisions of the 3rd and 4th tank groups. They were

defended (from north to south) by the 30th Army of the Kalinin Front (17 November transferred to the Western Front) and the 16th Army of the Western Front. The enemy had a significant superiority in artillery and tanks here. On November 15, the 3rd Panzer Group attacked the 30th Army, and the next day the 4th Panzer Group went on the offensive against the 16th Army. The enemy, regardless of the losses, climbed ahead. In November, frost bound the earth. Tank and motorized units of the enemy now rushed to Moscow not only along highways.

The situation on the right wing of the Western Front escalated sharply. The nervousness of the Stavka was transferred to the front command. Zhukov, who himself had always suffered from Stalin's interference in his affairs, now sometimes behaved in exactly the same way towards his subordinates. The resulting conflict with Rokossovsky had fundamental consequences.

Rokossovsky recalled: "During the three-day battles, the German command, apparently, was convinced that it would not be able to break through the defenses in the Volokolamsk direction. Therefore, continuing here to strike blow after blow and slowly two to three kilometers a day, crowding our units, it began to prepare a breakthrough to the south of the Volga reservoir. Such

The decision of the opposing side was probably also due to the fact that the Germans, advancing along the northern shore of the reservoir in the Kalinin Front sector, managed to capture the railway bridge and reach the Moscow-Leningrad highway.

Enemy troops quickly concentrated in the Klin direction. The threat from the north grew stronger. The pressure on our left wing, where all our reserves are put into action, does not stop ... All this made me think about measures that would improve the position of the army entrusted to me and allow us to slow down the advance of the enemy.

By this time, fighting in the center and on the left wing was going on 10–12 kilometers west of the Istra reservoir. The reservoir itself, the Istra River and the surrounding area represented an excellent line, having taken it in advance, it was possible, in my opinion, to organize a solid defense, moreover, with small forces.

... Having thoroughly thought through everything and carefully discussed it with my assistants, I reported our plan to the front commander and asked him to allow us to withdraw troops to the Istra line, without waiting for the enemy to force the defenders back there and force the river and reservoir on their shoulders ... The front commander did not take into Attention to my request and ordered me to stand to the death without moving a single step.

... I considered the issue of retreat to the Istra line extremely important. My duty as a commander and a communist did not allow me to resignedly agree with the decision of the front commander, and I turned to the chief of the General Staff, Marshal BM Shaposhnikov. In a telegram to him, we explained our proposal in detail. A few hours later we received a response. It said that our proposal was correct and that he, as chief of the General Staff, would sanction it. ... We immediately prepared an order for the troops to withdraw the main forces at night to the line of the Istra reservoir.

Reinforced

detachments were left in their former positions, which were supposed to retreat only under pressure from the enemy ... Before all our troops had time to receive an order to withdraw, a short but formidable telegram from Zhukov followed. I will quote it verbatim: "I command the troops of the front! I cancel the order to withdraw troops from the Istra reservoir. I order you to defend on the occupied line and not to retreat a step back. Army General Zhukov. What can you do - an

order is an order, and we, as soldiers, obeyed it. As a result, there were troubles. As we foresaw, the enemy, continuing to press our units on the left wing, pushed them back to the east, crossed Istra on the move and seized a bridgehead on its eastern bank. To

the south of the Volga reservoir, he broke through the defenses in the sector of the 30th army and began to quickly advance with tank and motorized formations, expanding the breakthrough ... At the same time, a blow was struck from the Teryaeva Sloboda area, and tanks with infantry moved towards Solnechnogorsk, bypassing the Istra reservoir from the north ... "263 In a conversation with students of the Military Academy. M.V. Frunze in 1962 Rokossovsky also noted: "Zhukov was wrong (when

forbade the 16th Army to retreat beyond the Istra reservoir. - V.D.). The rudeness he committed that day when talking on the HF phone crossed all boundaries. I said that if he did not change his tone, I would interrupt the conversation. Stalin tried in every possible way to find means to

forge the initiative of the advancing enemy. Finally, he decided to deprive the German troops of the opportunity to use the population they captured for recreation.

points. Order No. 0428264 of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command dated November 17 demanded: "Deprive the German army of the opportunity to be located in villages and cities, drive the German invaders out of all settlements into the cold in the field, smoke them out of all rooms and warm shelters and make them freeze in the open air." To this end, it is necessary to "destroy and burn to the ground all settlements in the rear of the German troops at a distance of 40-60 km in depth from the front line and 20-30 km to the right and left of the roads." To solve this problem, it was planned to use aviation, artillery and mortars, teams of scouts, skiers and partisan sabotage groups. In each regiment, it was instructed to create teams of hunters of 20-30 people to blow up and burn settlements in which enemy troops were stationed.

The order of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command was strictly carried out by the command of the Western Front.

"To Comrade Stalin, Comrade

Shaposhnikov In pursuance of the order of the Headquarters No. 0428 of November 17 on arson of settlements, the Military Council immediately took the following measures:

1. In divisions and

regiments, they began to form teams of hunters, most of whom are already active.

2. On the territory occupied by the enemy, intelligence agencies of the special department sent sabotage groups, with a total number of up to 500 people. 3. The armies were allocated a squadron of R-5 and U-2 aircraft, a total of 45

aircraft.

4. Manufactured and allocated to parts of individual incendiary means - thermite fuses, balls, cylinders, checkers - a total of 4300 units.

5. More than 100,000 bottles with incendiary mixtures and devices for their use were issued. 6. To help create teams of hunters in the division sent

from the reserve of the front 38 commanders.

7. Approved for each army, points to be burned and destroyed, and set tasks, in connection with this, to the branches of the armed forces (aviation, artillery, teams of hunters, sabotage and partisan detachments). Over the past time, 398 settlements have been

burned and destroyed, of which of them: in the 30th army - 105, 16-113, 5-55, 33-17, 43-24, 29-52, 50-32 points.

Most of the points were burned and destroyed by hunting teams and sabotage groups, artillery due to the lack of incendiary shells, and aviation due to bad weather, active work to carry out

assignments were not...

Work on the implementation of the order of the Headquarters No. 0428 continues in all parts of the front.

Zhukov

Bulganin. November 29,

1941.”²⁶⁵ The enemy persistently broke through to the near approaches to Moscow, increasing pressure on the troops of the Western Front. On November 20, 1941, the headquarters of Army Group Center received a directive from the Wehrmacht Supreme High Command:

“The goal of the operation on the northern flank of the GA (army group. - V.D.) “Center” should be the destruction of the enemy in the area of the city of Klin by double coverage. To do this, the northern flank of the motorized troops operating here, upon reaching the Klin road - the bend of the river. Volga east of st. Redkino should be turned to the east, while the forces advancing south, moving first to the east, through the Istra region in the direction of the Solnechnogorsk region, contributed to the success of the offensive of the northern group. Ensuring this operation from the east should be taken over by others

motorized connections (for example, replaced under the city of Kalinin).

Upon completion of this operation, it is planned, through the interaction of forces participating in the offensive on both flanks, to break through the front of the Moscow defense belt on both sides of the highway.

An offensive in the direction of Yaroslavl is envisaged if, after the completion of this offensive operation to break through the Moscow defense belt, sufficient forces will be available. ²⁶⁶ Zavidova, Yamuga. This allowed the enemy to develop success in the Klin direction. On November

23, units of the 56th Army Corps of the 3rd Panzer Group captured the city of Klin, forcing the troops of the 16th Army of General K.K. Rokossovsky to withdraw. As a result, a gap formed between the 30th and 16th armies and a real threat of breaking through the defenses of the Western Front and bypassing its right flank was created.

The Germans managed to capture an important operational map of the headquarters of the Western Front and concluded that the Soviet command “plans to leave the area west of the Canal. Moscow and again take up defense on the line Yakhroma - Solnechnogorsk - Istra reservoir. Strong minefields and obstacles of various kinds, encountered by the troops of the 3rd Panzer Group, confirm the data of this map . to eliminate the gap, create from the left-flank formations of the 30th Army and the right-flank formations of the

16th

²⁶⁵ Ibid. pp. 59–60.

²⁶⁶ Op. Quoted from: Battle of Moscow. Chronicle, facts, people. Book. 1.C. 695.

²⁶⁷ Ibid. pp. 745–746.

th Army, a temporary task force under the command of General F.D. Zakharov. She was given the task of detaining the enemy at all costs, preventing him from breaking through to Dmitrov and Yakhroma.

The situation on the left flank of the Western Front was no better. On November 21, units of the 2nd tank group of General G. Guderian broke through to Stalinogorsk (Novomoskovsk), bypassing Tula from the east. Under these conditions, Zhukov reinforced the 50th Army with the 239th Rifle Division, transferred from the Stavka reserve, and the 112th Tank Division.

At the same time, Zhukov and Bulganin issued an order to the military councils of the armies: "... The

struggle for the approaches to Moscow has taken on a decisive character over the past six days. The enemy

is straining his last efforts for six days, having collected reserves, is conducting an offensive on the front of the 30th, 16th, 5th and 50th armies. The experience of the six days of fighting shows that the troops understand the decisive importance of the fierce battles taking place. This is evidenced by the heroic resistance, turning into fierce counterattacks of the valiantly fighting 50, 53 cavalry divisions, 8 guards, 413 rifle divisions and the 1st guards, 27, 28 tank brigades and other units and formations. However, there were facts of violation by individual commanders of the well-known order on a categorical, under pain of immediate execution, prohibition of unauthorized withdrawal from their positions. Such a shameful fact was allowed by the commanders and commissars of the 17th and 24th cavalry divisions. Now that the struggle for Moscow has entered a decisive stage,

unauthorized abandonment of positions is tantamount to treason.

I order: 1.

Commanders and commissars of 17, 24 cavalry divisions arrest and put on trial. Commander 30 to put this into practice.

2. To warn all commanders of units, formations and all subunits that in real decisive battles they bear especially strict responsibility for the fulfillment of all combat orders and combat missions.

3. Any violation of the order for the prohibition of unauthorized withdrawal and leaving positions will be mercilessly punished.

This is required of us by the situation and the importance of the outcome of the ongoing

battles. This order is to be immediately brought to the attention of commanders and commissars of all divisions, units and formations ... "268

Perhaps these were the most difficult days for Zhukov in all wartime. Continuous sleepless nights. The rapidly changing environment required no less rapid decisions. The employees of the headquarters of the Western Front literally fell off their feet, but a clear, well-organized work made it possible to quickly collect information about the position of the troops, about the enemy and almost instantly respond to any changes. The headquarters of the front and personally the commander firmly held the control threads of the huge mechanism in their hands and did not allow failures in its work.

On one of these sleepless nights Stalin called Zhukov: will we keep Moscow? Such a question can only be asked by reaching the limit